

SCHISM IN A PROTESTANT CHINESE CHURCH WITH POSSIBLE
APPLICATIONS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS:
A CASE STUDY

A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at
Claremont, California

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Robert Fung
May 1982

This professional project, completed by

Robert Fung

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Chan-Hie Kim
David B. Chandler

Nov. 18, 1981
Date

Joseph C. Hayth
Dean

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

For their guidance and assistance
in the preparation of this project, the
investigator is most grateful to his advisory
committee:

Professor Chan-Hie Kim, Chairman

Professor David Chamberlain

R.F.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
ABSTRACT	vii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE PROBLEM	1
II. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM	1
III. THESIS	2
IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS	2
V. WORK PREVIOUSLY DONE IN THE FIELD	5
VI. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE PROJECT.	9
VII. PROCEDURE FOR INTEGRATION	9
II. A BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA	11
I. HISTORY	11
II. PROFILE-DESCRIPTION (Prior to Schism--May 1978)	23
III. SCHISM	37
I. ITS PERSISTENCE	37
II. ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS LEADING TO SCHISM	39
III. CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND SCHISM	50
IV. RESULTS OF CONFLICT/SCHISM	65

Chapter	Page
IV. CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	78
I. NATURE AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT	70
II. CONFLICT AND STYLES OF LEADERSHIP	90
III. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: NECESSITY, MEANING, GOALS, AND TECHNIQUES	96
IV. IN RETROSPECT: POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS IN THE CONFLICT/SCHISM OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY CHURCH	109
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	123
I. SUMMARY	123
II. CONCLUSION	128
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	132
APPENDIX	
A. LETTER OF RESIGNATION OF REV. JON WONG	138
B. RECALL PETITION LETTER	140
C. LETTER OF DECLINATION	142

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Table	Page
1. Church Income for Years 1977-1978	69
Figure	
1. Church Council Functional Responsibilities.	36

ABSTRACT

This project deals with a church schism caused by unresolved conflict arising from the different backgrounds, life-styles, and theological views of Overseas-born and American-born Chinese church members and their pastors.

The following tools and methods were used in this study: (1) library research to obtain background; (2) case study of the Chinese Community Church in San Diego, California; (3) an interview to elicit information in a parallel conflict/schism of the Japanese United Church of Christ in San Diego; (4) investigation into the nature, goals, and techniques of conflict resolution and their possible application to the schism in the Chinese Community Church; and (5) questionnaires to secure responses from selected representatives of the congregation who were involved in the conflict/schism. The respondents to each questionnaire gave answers to the following questions: (a) What was the nature of the church schism as you see it? (b) What caused the schism? (c) How did the church split affect you personally? Your family? The church as a whole?

The most significant fact that emerged from this study was that if a democratic style of leadership, including the use of conflict-management skills, had been used to achieve real growth and unity in the Chinese congregation, a schism might not have resulted.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

This project deals with a church schism caused by unresolved conflict arising from the different backgrounds, life-styles, and theological views of Overseas-born and American-born Chinese church members and their pastors. A retrospective analysis will show how a democratic style of leadership including use of conflict management skills might have been used to achieve real growth and unity in this Chinese congregation.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Unresolved conflict in a church results in practical problems of hostile factions, personal rivalries, and recriminations, and in disagreements which bring constructive activity to a halt. More fundamental are the spiritual and theological contradictions since the church is considered the indivisible Body of Christ and Christ himself is the symbol of wisdom and love. With devoted and skillful management the creative potential in conflict can be channeled into greater strength, understanding, and unity.

This project is a personal one for the investigator as his church underwent conflict and schism. The conflict centered around: (1) social dancing on church premises; (2) the pastor's authoritarian leadership style; (3) the attempted recall of the pastor who had resigned; (4) conservative versus liberal theological policies and programs within the church; and (5) the different life-styles between the Overseas-born and the American-born Chinese in the congregation.

It is the intent of this investigation to provide case study data on conflict and schism in a Chinese church so that not only Chinese, but other Asian-American churches and ministers may take positive steps to mitigate and resolve similar difficulties plaguing their own parishes.

III. THESIS

My thesis is that democratic leadership and effective conflict management skills would be of special relevance to pastors of Chinese-American churches. A pastoral counselor skilled in conflict resolution can be an instrument of reconciliation in maximizing the opportunity for healing and growth in churches experiencing conflict and schism.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

It is important that the author's use of terms

throughout this study be made clear to the reader. The following definitions and meanings are intended:

A. Conflict: Conflict is an intense, serious disagreement on major issues among two or more parties. A high degree of polarization takes place among the hostile camps. Relationships are damaged or destroyed and disagreement over the issues is converted into hostility and possible violence toward the antagonist.¹

B. Overseas-born Chinese: Chinese-Americans born and raised overseas (mainland China, Hong Kong, Formosa, and other parts of the world), whose basic orientation is Chinese and who use Chinese as their primary language. This group is often referred to as the OBC.

C. American-born Chinese: United States citizens of Chinese ancestry born in the United States, whose lifestyle is American and whose primary language is English. This group is frequently referred to as the ABC.

D. Conservative: For purposes of this study, a religious conservative is defined as a Christian whose theological orientation is characterized by an endeavor to maintain the status quo. Generally a conservative believes in a restricted body of doctrine based on faith. His religious experience is conceived of as consisting primarily of

¹Edward O. Moe, Controversy and Conflict (Cincinnati: Board of Missions, Methodist Church, 1964), p. 3.

a dependent relationship with an "Other" (God) and often he believes that his faith should be equated with personal morality.

E. Liberal:

A Christian who demands in his theological thinking a freedom to discuss, formulate and evaluate ideas according to the light of his best understanding independent of the historical norms of faith as set up by creeds, councils and confessions. He may agree with many of the views of conservatives--but for different reasons and in a different vocabulary; he may, however, differ widely from the conservatives, particularly in a different emphasis of doctrines and practices. He trusts reason as the only tool by which to measure truth, although he may weigh tradition and authority with the respect to which they are due. Man's reason is the glory of creation, not a curse. Furthermore, to a liberal, Christianity is held to be a religion of nurture and growth in maturity of ideas and practices rather than a sacred commitment to views held by past generations of ecclesiastical theologians or to one stream of historical continuity.²

F. Authoritarian leadership: "a style of leadership which gives the least amount of freedom and responsibility to members of the group. The decision-making function resides in the leader."³ Usually the leader's orders are conveyed down to his followers who then are expected to follow them completely.

G. Democratic leadership: "The decision-making power and function is placed in the group. That is to say that all who must abide by the decisions, follow rules, and

²Vergilius Ferm, A Protestant Dictionary (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), pp. 142-43.

³Charles P. Hamby, "Conflict in the Local Church: Its

carry out programs should have a part in their creation."⁴
 This style of leadership is equalitarian because power, responsibility, and mutual respect for others are encouraged in the group.

H. Schism: a division of a church into factions.

I. Rev. Jon Wong: a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the man who was pastor of the Chinese Community Church from 1969-1978 and whose resignation from the same church and attempted recall led to schism.

V. WORK PREVIOUSLY DONE IN THE FIELD

The chapter on the history of my church will be based on Elizabeth C. MacPhail's article titled: "San Diego Chinese Mission,"⁵ as well as on various booklets published by the Chinese Community Church on different occasions.

Conflict resolution as a field of study came about as an offshoot of work done by such classical social theorists as Hegel, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Max Webber, and Georg Simmel. Their major work contained references to, and discussion of social conflict. Georg Simmel, to whom we owe a classical analysis of various forms of

Causes and Creative Resolution" (Unpublished Rel.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1965), p. 111.

⁴Ibid., p. 113.

⁵Elizabeth C. MacPhail, "San Diego Chinese Mission," Journal of San Diego History, XXIII, 2 (Spring 1977), 9-21.

conflicts, insisted that "conflict is a form of sociation" and that "a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy, is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together."⁶

Considerable research has been carried out on the nature, causes, and resolution of social conflicts in the fields of social psychology, human behavior, and business management. For a more recent work in the field one can consult the analytical summary in Mack and Snyder.⁷

On the other hand, little study has been given to conflict in churches as such until just recently. Charles P. Hamby in his thesis has analyzed the nature and causes of conflicts in churches and uncovered methods and procedures by which conflicts can be resolved creatively and their detrimental effects in churches and individuals avoided or lessened.⁸

In early 1981, G. Douglas Lewis came out with his Resolving Church Conflicts: A Case Study Approach for Local Congregations. The researcher of this paper is much

⁶Lewis Coser, "Conflict Theory" in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan, 1968), III, 232.

⁷Raymond W. Mack and Richard S. Snyder, "The Analysis of Social Conflict: Toward an Overview and Synthesis," Journal of Conflict Resolution, I (1957) 212-248.

⁸Hamby, entire study.

indebted to Lewis for providing him with a great number of germinal ideas and approaches to creative conflict management.⁹

Kittlaus and Leas in their book provided basic concepts, experiences, processes, and tools for congregational leaders to manage church conflicts in constructive ways.¹⁰ Their ideas further support the suggestions of Hamby on the processes leaders can use to diffuse conflicts in parishes.

Robert Lee and Russell Galloway tell how a church's history in dealing with conflict will weigh heavily on how it deals with it in the present. In other words, these authors described what happened to churches with a history of effective conflict management and what happened to those with little or none.¹¹ In applying their insights to the Chinese Community Church situation, I began to understand one of the major reasons why my parish failed to meet conflicts effectively.

T. W. Adorno and his colleagues in their epochal

⁹Douglas Lewis, Resolving Church Conflicts (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981)

¹⁰Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus, Church Fights (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977)

¹¹Robert Lee and Russell Galloway, The Schizophrenic Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969)

study of the authoritarian personality showed the influence of psychological and sociological factors on the formation of individual ideology. From Adorno and his colleagues, I became aware of the role of the authoritarian personality in human and social conflicts, particularly how a pastor with an authoritarian style of leadership can often contribute to the protraction and intensification of conflict in his church.¹²

In helping churches to understand the functions of conflict or in teaching referees the dynamics of conflict, it is often helpful to use simulation games of one kind or another. One of the least expensive books of games and experiences is the one by Pfeiffer and Jones.¹³

The game often recommended is the "Cities Game" developed by David Popoff.¹⁴

Finally, Eddie Lo's paper titled: "Toward a Greater Cooperation Between the Overseas-Born Chinese and the American-Born Chinese:¹⁵ was of great help in understanding

¹²T. W. Adorno et al., The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950)

¹³William Pfeiffer and John Jones, A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training (Iowa City: Iowa University Association Press, 1970) III.

¹⁴David Popoff, "How to Play the 'Cities Game,'" Psychology Today, II (August 1968) 28 ff.

¹⁵Eddie Lo, "Toward a Greater Cooperation Between the Overseas-Born Chinese and the American-Born Chinese" (Paper presented to the North American Congress of Chinese

the gulf between the two groups in Chinese churches due to their different habits, manners, outlook in life, and psychological makeup. He also suggested ways, including the utilization of religious resources, for greater cooperation between the ABC and the OBC. His ideas were incorporated in the chapters on schism and conflict management in this study.

VI. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE PROJECT

This project consists of a case study of conflict and schism in a Chinese Protestant Church, with analysis of sources of conflict in cultural differences and leadership style. Special attention is given to skills in conflict resolution drawn from psychological literature, and how these skills might have been used in this case.

VII. PROCEDURE FOR INTEGRATION

Integration

This study will suggest how democratic leadership and conflict resolution skills may contribute to healing, growth, and unity in a church experiencing conflict.

Evangelicals, August 1974)

Methods or Tools Used

The following tools and methods were used in this study: (1) library research to obtain background; (2) case study of the Chinese Community Church in San Diego, California; (3) an interview to elicit information in a parallel conflict/schism of the Japanese United Church of Christ in San Diego; (4) investigation into the nature, goals, and techniques of conflict resolution and their possible application to the schism in the Chinese Community Church; and (5) questionnaires to secure responses from selected representatives of the congregation who were involved in the conflict/schism. The respondents to each questionnaire gave answers to the following questions: (a) What was the nature of the church schism as you see it? (b) What caused the schism? (c) How did the church split affect you personally? Your family? Your friends? The church as a whole?

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE
CHINESE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

I. HISTORY

Introduction

Just down the street, a few steps from Market Street, quiet, soothing organ music comes from the beautiful little Chinese Community Church, a welcome oasis with its lovely oriental shrubbery. Standing in the shadows is the quiet figure of a woman--and we pass on, hoping that the bewildered one has found sanctuary.¹

Thus Edwin Martin, a local news columnist, described the Chinese Community Church when it was located downtown prior to 1960. From the time of its inception, it has had an important and effective part in the spiritual life and community of the Chinese in San Diego.

School

Ninety-five years ago, in 1885, the Chinese Community Church had its beginnings as an English class for Chinese immigrants organized by concerned Caucasian Christians from the First Presbyterian Church in downtown San Diego. The first class was started by a Mrs. Wood, wife

¹Edwin Martin, "Songs of a City," San Diego Union and Evening Tribune (September 13, 1951)

of a civil engineer from San Francisco. Weekly sessions were held in the parent church with leaders provided by the host church. Among the first instructors were Mrs. George Geddes and Mr. George Marston. The latter established the Marston Department Store, a leading business firm in San Diego for many years.

In 1885, San Diego's Chinese population numbered only several hundred. They were almost entirely male, isolated in Chinatown, a part of the red-light district. Alien Chinese had little contact with the larger community. They could not be citizens. They could not and would not integrate. Most looked upon themselves as "sojourners" in a foreign land, ever hopeful of making a fortune quickly in the land of the "Gold Mountain" and returning to China and being able to "live the life of Riley!"

The English school class offered the Chinese the opportunity to learn the English language which was necessary in order to find work and to carry on business with Americans.

Mission

In that same year, 1885, even as the class was meeting in the Presbyterian Church, plans were being laid to establish a Chinese Mission in San Diego. Elizabeth C. McPhail, lawyer, daughter of a later worker at the Mission and a local San Diego historian, describes the events

leading up to the formation of the Mission in this manner:

The Chinese Mission School in San Diego was the inspiration of a young Chinese resident by the name of Lee Hong who had come from San Francisco and was familiar with mission schools there. In 1885 he persuaded Dr. William C. Pond of the American Home Missionary Association, whose work was with the Chinese in Calif., to come to San Diego and organize a Mission School. Almost all the Chinese in San Diego were men, and the need was for a school to teach them to read, write and speak English. Dr. Pond rented a house on the corner of 13th and F for use of the new mission school. Classes were held at night and on Sunday, and were taught by dedicated men and women who devoted their time free of charge. They not only taught English but helped in solving the many problems facing the solitary and lonely men in a strange and often hostile land. Dr. Pond visited the mission school regularly, watching its progress with interest, even after 1890 when the Congregational denomination took over the work in San Diego County. His interest continued for nearly fifty years until his death at the age of ninety five.²

Many Chinese men, young and old, found their way directly to the mission because of their desire to learn the English language. They could do this without cost while having the very best tutoring. Sometimes there were as many as fifty attending the evening sessions. Among the early leaders at the mission school were Mrs. Margaret Fanton, who was superintendent from 1911 through 1925, and Mrs. Anna Waldo who succeeded her, serving until 1925, when the Rev. C. C. Hung arrived from Honolulu to be the first minister of the mission.

During this time, the school was growing very fast.

²Elizabeth C. MacPhail, "San Diego Chinese Mission," Journal of San Diego History, XXIII, 2 (Spring 1977) 11.

There were forty members living at the mission and about twenty teachers helping. With the passage of time, facilities at the original 13th and E Street location became inadequate. A larger building was needed and a campaign was launched for a new church and dormitory. Since the turn of the century the mission was moved three times.

In 1926, under the leadership of Rev. Hung, a building campaign, previously mentioned, raised \$15,000 to construct the second location of the mission site, including a men's dormitory on First Avenue, above Market Street. The land was a gift from George Marston, an earlier pioneer teacher of English at the mission. The front portion of the completed building was the mission, while screens were used to divide the hall into classrooms. The back portion of the building was the dormitory. Each of the eighteen rooms in this dormitory was donated by members of the mission or by friends. These rooms were rented at \$6.00 a month to help defray the cost of running the mission. At this time the mission served approximately 500 residents in San Diego who were of Chinese descent.

Mrs. Margaret Fanton, also affectionately known as "Mother Fanton," continued to serve the mission until 1936, when her health failed, at which time Mrs. Delia Reinbold, a private school teacher, succeeded her. Mrs. Reinbold was assisted by a group of dedicated leaders from other churches who taught English classes and conducted the Sunday School.

Mr. Hung's pastorate lasted until 1928, when he was called to the pulpit of the Chinese Community Church in Washington, D.C.

From 1927-1936, a period of nine years, five different Chinese ministers served the mission on a part-time basis.

In 1937, the Rev. K. T. Wong arrived from Canton, China, with his bride, Edith. He was the first full-time minister of the mission. The couple lived in the dormitory. Mrs. Wong was the first woman ever to live there and she endeared herself to all those living in the dormitory, giving fully of herself, helping the men with their English school work, and especially acting as interpreter when immigration problems arose. She was a great adjunct to her husband's ministry. Rev. Wong organized a flourishing Chinese language school for the Chinese children in the community. He also taught at the University Extension College. The first all-Chinese Boy Scout Troop, Troop 101, was first chartered under his direction and remained viable until the late 1950s.

Church

When Rev. Wong left for a new pastorate in 1946, Dr. Peter A. Lee, a college professor, became his successor. Dr. Lee became quite controversial for his leftist political views which he espoused, not from the pulpit, but from

his teaching platform at San Diego State, where he taught philosophy classes. However, Dr. Lee was primarily responsible for leading the congregation in taking the proper steps to change the mission into a self-supporting church. But this significant step from mission to church status was not without opposition. Dr. Lee says:

It seems like yesterday that I had to go all over town to get signatures to petition the Conference to form a Church group rather than being a mission. At that time a small group of our people were against my project, but we came through with flying colors.³

Following Dr. Lee's departure in 1948, a non-Chinese minister, the Rev. John Barbour, conducted services for two years besides serving as pastor of his own church, the Plymouth Congregational Church. This was definitely a labor of love on Mr. Barbour's part. He often had to hustle quite a bit in order to finish conducting his service at an earlier hour and then get down to the Chinese church for its service at 12 noon or thereabouts.

In 1950, the Rev. Robert Fung, a graduate of the Presbyterian San Francisco Theological Seminary, assumed the pastorate. He was accompanied by his bride, Kay.

During the 1950s the situation was quite different from the early days. A family-centered program with emphasis on children was instituted. The Sunday School

³ Peter A. Lee, Congratulatory remarks, Diamond Jubilee Booklet (Chinese Community Church, September 1960).

was composed of American-born children meeting every Sunday. Because of transportation problems, the Sunday School could not meet at the usual 10:45 a.m. time prior to the morning service, but did convene at the same time as the church worship service.

Because of lack of room, classes were held in the parlor, kitchen, bedrooms of the dormitory, and even in the hallways of the church. Interest in the church program grew and so this program developed at a rapid pace. By 1957, the Sunday School enrolled 125 pupils. Twenty teachers and assistants took care of the nursery and classes ranging up through the high school level. Mrs. Reinbold worked faithfully as the Director of Religious Education until her death in 1956, when Mrs. Verna Dean Browning was hired to fill that vacancy.

During his seven years as pastor of the church, Rev. Fung led his people in cleaning and upgrading the church premises so that it was in proper condition for use as various programs developed. Many an hour was spent sweeping the floor, laying new tile, painting the walls, varnishing the pews, moving the furniture, and even washing the toilets!

Perhaps the most memorable feature of Mr. Fung's pastorate was that practically everything at the church was done in one room--the church sanctuary--a multipurpose oblong room. Moving the pews and furniture around as

required, sometimes even into the street, the congregation ate, studied, prayed, folk-danced, and even went to the bathroom in it. At least, the ladies did. For the Women's Rest Room was located in the back of the sanctuary and when the toilet was flushed, the noise could be heard loud and clear. It was especially annoying and distressing when the minister was trying to emphasize a point in his sermon or when the congregation was in prayer.

In May of 1957 Rev. Fung resigned to enter public school teaching. However, he has managed to maintain his close relationship with the church in various capacities as member, Director of Christian Education, and Associate Pastor to the present.

For three months, Rev. Hugh Reiner, a fellow United Church of Christ minister, acted as the interim pastor until the Rev. Harold Jow, after twelve years of service as pastor of the United Church of Christ in Honolulu, took over the parish.

Because of overcrowded facilities and location in an industrial area with all of its noise and pollution, plans were made for relocation of the church under the direction of Rev. Jow. A Building Committee was formed and it busily engaged itself in looking over possible sites for a new church.

The following months were hectic ones, culminating in a congregational meeting on August 31, 1958, which

approving the purchase of the Decker property at 1750 47th Street. On September of the same year, the church purchased the seven and one-half acres of land on 47th Street bordering Chollas Valley at the very favorable price of \$30,000 and immediately launched a drive to raise the building fund. The building on First Street was sold in January 1960 and the congregation began a seven-month occupancy of the Parish Hall of St. Paul's Episcopal Church for its worship services while construction of their new church at 1750 47th Street began in March.

The new church was completed in the autumn of 1960 and in September of that same year the church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with the premiere of an original play, "Gold Mountain," at the Russ Auditorium and the dedication of the new church. The Diamond Jubilee festivities also included a Jubilee Ball, a Community Picnic, an Anniversary Service of Communion, a Service of Dedication, a Tree-Planting Ceremony, a Choir Festival, and a Reception.

The church's new facilities included a sanctuary seating over 200, five spacious classrooms, a pastor's study, a sacristy, and a bride's room, as well as a large narthex. Thus was completed the first phase of the church's Master Building Plan. The second phase will consist of construction on the site of a parish hall, a kitchen, additional classrooms, and a manse. Phase three will lead to eventual complete development of the site. This will

include an amphitheatre, an acre-size area for play, and a bell-tower and shrine fronting 47th Street. If and when the site is completely developed, the Chinese Community Church will have the largest physical plant of all Chinese churches in North America.

Rev. Jow pastored the church on its new site until 1963, when he returned to Hawaii to resume the pastorate of his old church.

In 1963, Rev. Joseph Ma from San Francisco became the pastor. Under his leadership the church continued to grow and flourished. While he was pastor, the second phase of the Master Building was begun.

Upon Rev. Ma's termination of his pastorate with the church in 1969, Rev. Jon Wong (a pseudonym to protect the identity of the minister who was pastor during the schism) became the new minister. Rev. Wong led the congregation in completing the building of the Parish Hall or Community Center, kitchen, and additional parking spaces. The multipurpose hall is used for receptions, classes, movies, meetings, dinners, and other community activities. It has a seating capacity of 450, or space for 350 diners seated at table. The Community Center was finally erected and dedicated in 1971.

Under the leadership of Rev. Wong, who was full-time pastor for the years 1969-76, and Rev. Robert Fung, the Associate Pastor (part-time volunteer), the church saw

the appearance of new directions, organizations, and activities in the 1970s. For example, new emphasis was placed on ministering to the needs of Chinese-speaking members of the congregation, particularly those who arrived from Hong Kong. Varied activities such as church dinners, Chinese New Year celebrations, Tai-Chi and Karate classes, Chinese Language School expansion, and Asian Youth programs held on the premises were among the new developments.

In May of 1978 Rev. Jon Wong resigned from the church after a bitter dispute over certain church policies, and the church was split between those who supported Jon and those who did not. The division was further complicated by many factors, including differences between those members who were theologically conservative and those who were liberal.

During the period from May to December 1978, a number of members left the church; some resigned from membership and became the founders of the newly established Chinese Evangelical Church of San Diego under Rev. Jon Wong, its pastor.

The Associate Pastor, Rev. Robert Fung, who was a former pastor, with the dedicated assistance of the new Church Moderator Roger Lee (the former Moderator had resigned during the schism), and the Church Secretary David Seid, along with countless loyal members of the church, kept the church operating and viable as an institution for

approximately three-fourths of the year (June 1978-February 1979) until the new pastor, the Rev. Karl Fung (not related to the Associate Pastor), accepted the call.

In the more than two years since Rev. Karl Fung has been the spiritual leader of the church many new and good things have happened. For example, a mission satellite church located in Linda Vista was established to minister to the needs of those ethnic Chinese from Vietnam who have settled in that district. This is the first time the Chinese Community Church has ever been so mission-conscious. Several new organizations such as the College-Young Adults and Young Couples Groups were started, and the defunct Women's Fellowship was revitalized.

The church celebrated its ninety-fifth Anniversary Homecoming Celebration on August 30-31, 1980, with a tree-planting ceremony and the dedication of a manse. The manse, a donated house formerly occupied by the former scout master, Mr. Paul Yee of Troop 101, cost the church about \$27,000 for renovations.

A spirit of positive optimism pervades every nook and corner of the church. The concern for the survival of the church, especially in the immediate period following the schism, is no longer a problem. Most important of all, the pain occasioned by the schism is not as acutely felt as before. Healing is being accomplished as time passes.

Who knows what is in store for the Chinese

Community Church in its almost a century of existence and in the following years? Only God knows. But it is important for each member of this church who follows Him to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to be used in old as well as new avenues to usher in His Kingdom among the Chinese in San Diego.

II. PROFILE-DESCRIPTION (Prior to Schism--May 1978)

Denominational Affiliation

The Chinese Community Church is not an independent church. It is part of the United Church of Christ denomination, consisting of 1.8 million members in 6,500 congregations in the United States. The United Church of Christ is a creature of the union of three previously separate Protestant traditions. The first strand was the Congregational Church, which dates back to 1620 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. In 1930 the Congregational Church merged with the Christian Church to form the Congregational-Christian Church which functioned as one body until 1957. In that year, the German Evangelical and Reformed Church joined with the Congregational-Christian Church to form the new United Church of Christ.

This move toward additional organic union is continuing as talks are now proceeding on the possibility of

the UCC merging with the Disciples of Christ--a church also approximately the same size as the United Church of Christ.

The Chinese Community Church is also a supporting member of the Ecumenical Council of San Diego, which serves the community with other churches of different denominations.

Membership

The Chinese Community Church, like the typical Chinese Church in America, is small in size. As of May 1978, its membership totaled 234 persons. Of this number almost all are Chinese with the exception of one Black, two Japanese, and two Caucasian members. The majority of its members are young and middle-aged, with a few who are over 50. There are both American-born and Overseas-born Chinese in the congregation.

Although the church has a Doctrinal Statement and a Statement of Faith in its Constitution, neither is considered a test for membership. Rather they are an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets God's Word.

Instead, "membership of this church shall be open to all persons of Christian faith and intent, who assent to the church Covenant."⁴

⁴Constitution and By-Laws of The Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California, Revised ed., 1966, p. 3.

New members may be received in any of the following ways:

1. Letter of transfer from another church.
2. "Re-affirmation of faith" on recommendation of the Board of Deacons.
3. On confession of faith and baptism.
4. "Confirmation" for those who had received child baptism and are now old enough to profess their faith in Christ.

Prospective members are usually urged to attend a membership class and at the conclusion of the training period are received into the church at a designated worship service.

Nature of the Worship Services

Every Sunday a bilingual morning service would be held from 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Prior to the service, a short Singspiration would help the early comers to "get in the mood" for worship. A stated order of service in a printed program in both the Chinese and English languages was utilized to give movement and direction to the service. The pastor usually gave a thirty to thirty-five-minute sermon in English and then immediately followed it with a brief summary in Chinese. Sometimes the pastor's message would be given by him in English and it would be simultaneously translated into Chinese and be picked up by

individual earphones located in the last three rows of one section of the pews.

The Chancel Choir led the congregation in worship musically and usually would render one anthem per service. The songs sung by the congregation, the prayers, announcements, and scripture readings would be in both languages. There were some in the congregation who could understand both the Chinese and English. Others could comprehend only one or the other.

An informal Evening Service was held once a month. This service was lightly attended, and was intended for those unable to worship in the morning. This entire service was held in English.

Weekly Service Attendance

The average weekly attendance at the morning service was about 150. This figure is only an estimate, as the attendance record was lost or thrown away in the process of cleaning up the pastor's office in preparation for the arrival of the new pastor after the schism. However, this figure was corroborated not only by the Church Moderator but by three deacons who served as ushers from January to May of 1978, including the deacon who recorded the weekly attendance.

Finances

The church is self-supporting. This is a significant factor worthy of note, as many Chinese churches are supported entirely or partly by their denominations even today. Income for the church comes from three sources: (a) pledges, (b) loose offerings, and (c) memorial and other gifts.

The budget for 1978 was set at \$50,480, of which \$14,148 was allocated for the pastor's annual salary. However, the church was not obligated to pay almost half of this amount, from August to December, after the pastor's resignation.

Income from January to December of 1978 was \$41,484.14. Expenses for the year were \$39,382.19--a net gain of \$2,101.95.⁵

Additional resources of the church amounted to \$70,000, consisting of stocks and bonds, and of monies in savings accounts, drawing interest. This reserve is earmarked for use in future church construction only.

The church is not entirely debt-free, however. It pays a monthly mortgage of \$670 to the bank for loans incurred in earlier building and construction projects.

⁵Joanne Sparks (Church Treasurer), Special Financial Report for the period January 1977-June, 1979 for the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California.

As a rule the church does not engage in many special fund-raising events to meet its financial needs. But two annual fund-raising projects such as the Annual Thanksgiving Church Dinner and the Chinese New Year Celebration Banquet help to augment the treasury.

Physical Facilities

The overwhelming problem of lack of facilities and space to carry on its program was resolved when the church moved to its present site of seven and one-half acres at 1750 47th Street. The physical plant consists of three parts: (a) the sanctuary, a sacristy, a wing of Sunday School rooms; (b) the Parish Hall or Community Center; and (c) a manse which was not added until 1980.

Leadership and Administration

Two ordained pastors served the church. Rev. Jon Wong was the paid full-time pastor. He was born in Shanghai, China, in 1922. He is married and the father of a son and a daughter.

Mr. Wong's academic background includes a B.A. in Economics from St. John's University, Shanghai, China, and a Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree from New York Theological Seminary. He served in four other churches part-time and was full-time pastor of the Chinese Community Church in Sacramento, California, before assuming the

pastorate in San Diego. At the time of his resignation in May 1978, he had served the Chinese Community Church in San Diego for almost nine years.

Rev. Robert Fung was and still is the Associate Pastor, serving as a part-time volunteer. He was born in San Francisco, California, in 1923. Bob is married to Kay and they have no children.

Mr. Fung secured his B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley, his Master of Divinity from the Presbyterian San Francisco Theological Seminary, and his Master of Arts from California Western University, now known as the United States International University [in La Jolla, California]. He also managed to obtain his General Secondary Teaching Credential from San Diego State University while pastoring the church. Mr. Fung was ordained in 1950 and served full-time in the church in 1957. In that year he resigned from the church and went into public school teaching, in which he is still engaged while writing this project.

Other staff members include: (a) a part-time custodian, (b) a paid Choir Director and Organist, and (c) a paid part-time Church Office Secretary.

Lay Leadership

The church is democratic in principle and in practice. The majority rules. While the ultimate authority

resides in Jesus Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith," the will of the voting membership of the congregation prevails with respect to policy, program, and administration of the church.

Guided by and subject to the Church Constitution and The By-Laws, the church operates with the following bodies:

- a. The Church Council: its duties are to serve as the overall coordinating, legislative, and policy-forming board of the church.
- b. Board of Deacons: the duty of the Deacons and Deaconesses is to cooperate with the pastors in ministering to the spiritual needs of the church and the community.
- c. Board of Trustees: is in charge of the business and financial affairs of the church and takes care of and holds custody of the real and personal property of the church.
- d. Board of Christian Education: supervises and directs the educational work and recreational life of the church.

The elected lay officers of the church are:

- a. Moderator: he is the lay leader of the church and coordinator of its activities.
- b. Secretary: keeps the official records of the church and corresponds for it.
- c. Financial Secretary: receives all monies received by the church and keeps an accurate record of such.

- d. Treasurer: serves as the chief financial agent of the church.
- e. Members-at-large: these two officers represent the congregation at all meetings of the Church Council and act as watchdogs.

The appointed officers are:

- a. Auditor: he examines the accounts of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary and reports their status to the Church Council.
- b. Historian: keeps a journal of all occurrences of a historical nature for the church.

In dealing with any issue which comes up for consideration in the Church Council, the following officers, who are ex-officio members, do not have a vote: (a) Pastors, (b) Financial Secretary. The voting members are: (a) the Moderator, who can only vote to break a tie, (b) the Secretary, (c) the Treasurer, (d) two representatives from the Boards of Trustees, Deacons, and Christian Education, and (e) two Members-at-large (one vote each).

In order to understand more clearly the organizational structure, relationships, and functional responsibilities of the Church Council, various Boards, officers, and other matters relating to the operation of the church, the reader is advised to consult the chart on functional responsibilities of the church organization described in this chapter (Figure 1, p. 36).

Denominational Support

Support for the denomination was minimal during the first five months of 1978, before the schism, due to a growing desire of some members of the congregation, led by the pastor, to review the church's ties and relationship with the denomination. There was even talk about the possibility of the Chinese Church becoming independent. However, \$286 was sent to the denominational headquarters as per capita dues, as well as \$104 for other UCC projects.

Groups Within the Organization

The Sunday School. Enrollment before the schism was 117, including teachers. It is directed by a Sunday School superintendent chosen by the Board of Christian Education. Classes range from nursery to adult classes in both English and Chinese. The curriculum was originally UCC material, but when Rev. Wong and the "conservatives" of the church took over, the David C. Cook material was used. The David C. Cook material is widely used by the evangelical free churches in America.

United Church Youth. This group is made up of junior high and high school young people meeting every Saturday night for fun, fellowship, and Bible study. Two college-age advisors give the necessary guidance. Two of the annual highlights in the calendar of the Sunday School

Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas Eve Caroling.

AYC. The college-age and young adults group who meet every Sunday evening for a program suited to their interests comprise this group. Members of this organization are also the guiding light of the monthly informal Evening Service.

Cantonese Fellowship. This is principally a fellowship group for those who came from Hong Kong and is Chinese language oriented. This assemblage met once a month after morning service for a pot-luck luncheon and a program which usually consisted of a special speaker.

Ladies' Guild. The oldest group within the church, the Ladies' Guild is composed of some fifty or more mature ladies who were born in China and are, in general, Chinese-speaking. This group meets once a month after service. Members of the Guild serve the church in many capacities and enjoy cooking for many church functions with a great deal of relish.

Women's Fellowship. Made up of English-speaking women who may or may not know Chinese, this group meets once a month at various times during the week. Unlike the Ladies' Guild, the members of this group are more involved in outside community affairs which are not Chinese, since they do not have a language and communication problem. Under

their leadership the necessary kitchen utensils were purchased to equip the new kitchen built at the time of the completion of the Parish Hall.

Choirs. Besides the Sanctuary choir which serves faithfully throughout the year, a Young People's Choir, drawn mostly from the ranks of the UCY, would often present special contemporary musical sacred numbers for the morning service.

Mid-week Thursday Night Meeting. This group was established to pray for the spiritual needs of the church. The only ones who usually came were the pastor, his wife, and a "few faithful souls."

Community Involvement

In terms of community involvement, the Chinese Church has been and is interested in the nonspiritual affairs of the Chinese in San Diego. But in recent years, the Chinese Social Service Center has been taking care of the needs of the Chinese senior citizens and those who need public assistance. In fact, some of the members of the church are on the staff there and others are volunteer workers in the Center. UPAC (United Pan Asian Communities) augments the human-care services of the Chinese Social Service Center, as well as fighting for the rights and ethnic identities of Pan Asians, including Chinese, in

San Diego.

To further serve the Chinese community, the Chinese Church offered its premises to the Chung Hwa Chinese Language School as a place to hold its classes. The school marked its tenth anniversary of meeting for classes on church property. For a nominal fee the school, operating two days out of the week, offers Mandarin and Cantonese classes to children and adults. Chinese in San Diego gain identity and pride in their heritage by attending this school.

Church Newsletter

This monthly bilingual communique which was sent free to members of the church customarily consisted of a short message from the pastor, various announcements on church activities, brief articles of a general nature on spiritual matters, and a listing of the sermonic topics in the services for the month.

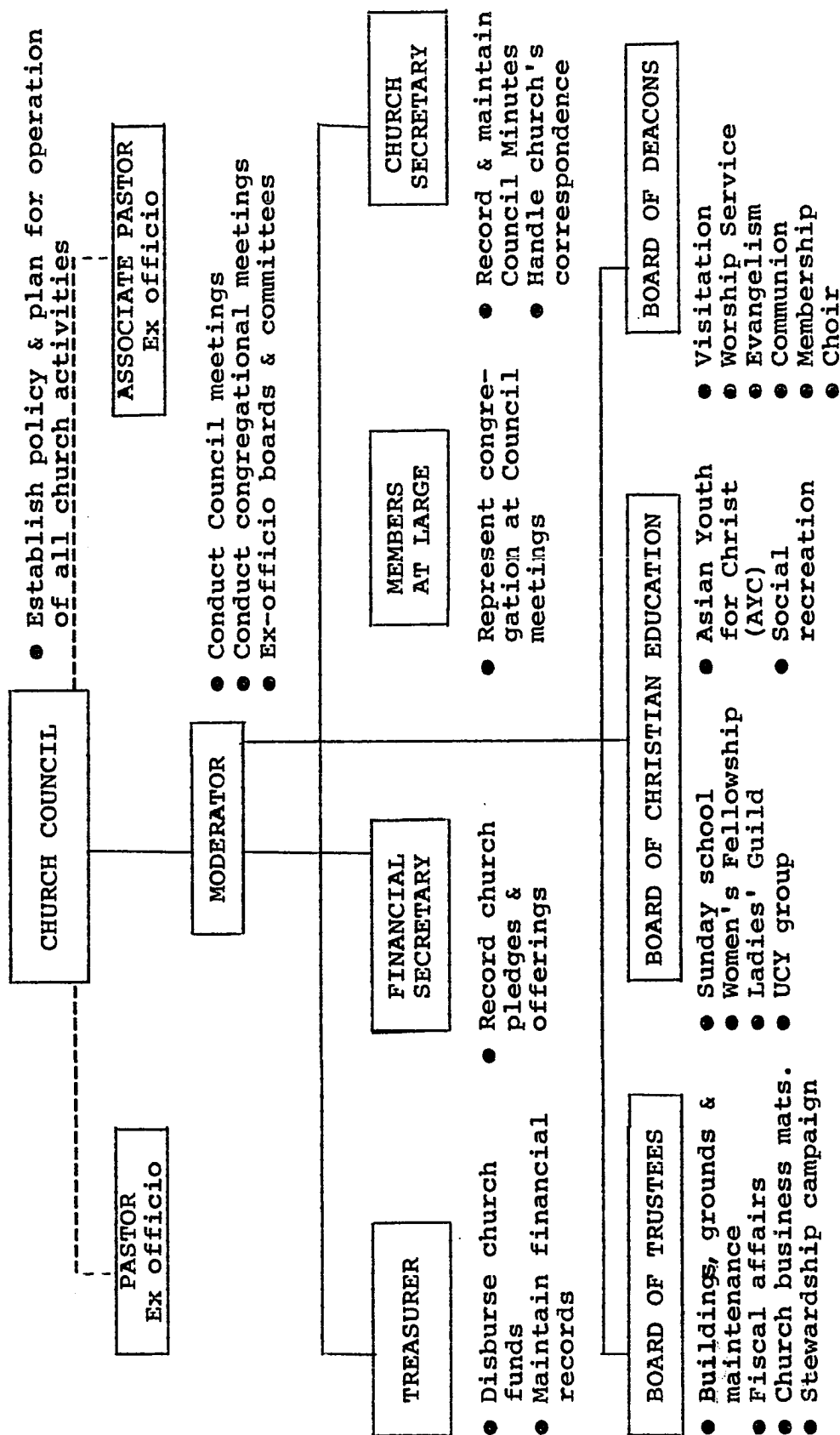


Figure 1. Church Council Functional Responsibilities

CHAPTER III

SCHISM

I. ITS PERSISTENCE

Christ did not always
use spittle with clay for cures,
some people choose sides,
like in games, calling those helped
mudites and the opposite.¹

A church schism is a division of a church into factions. This "scandal of division" within His Body was exactly what our Lord was trying to avoid in His great intercessory prayer in John 17:20f. Jesus prayed for all of His followers that they shall be as He and the Father are one, However, the Christian Church has been woefully unable to fulfill this appeal for Christian unity based on Christ's principle of love from its very inception.

The Apostle Paul had problems in this same area. He was anxious over the "division" that very early plagued the churches he helped establish during the first century. He said:

Now I do beg you, my brothers, by all that our Lord Jesus Christ means to you, to speak with one voice, and do not allow yourselves to be split up into parties. All together you should be achieving a unity in thought and judgement. For I know, from what some of Chloe's people have told me, that you are each making claims--

¹William Walter DeBolt, "How Sects Began," Christian Century, XCVII (November 5, 1980) 1052.

'I am one of Paul's men,' says one; 'I am one of Apollos', ' says another; or 'I am one of Peter's . . . ' (I Cor. 1:10-12)

When one observes the number of schisms that have occurred in the history of the Church, from the "Great Schism" of the Roman Catholic Church to the proliferation of the countless groups arising from the Protestant Reformation, one might be forced to come to the conclusion that church schisms are the rule rather than the exception.

The investigator of this paper became personally concerned with church schisms when the Chinese Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, his home church, experienced the walk-out of one hundred of its members in a dispute in 1953. Both ministers of the church involved in the split were close friends of the writer, and each was on the opposite side. You can imagine the emotional turmoil that was generated in the heart of the writer.

In recent, subsequent years, we find an increasing frequency of schisms in Asian-American churches, i.e. (a) the Japanese Ocean View United Church of Christ in San Diego, California, divided in 1974;² (b) the Chinese Congregational Church in Los Angeles broke apart in the early 1970s; (c) the Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco suffered a split in 1978, with one third of the membership

²Interview with Don H. Estes, Officer, Japanese Ocean View United Church of Christ, San Diego, California, June 15, 1978.

leaving to form another church;³ and (d) the Mandarin Church in San Diego separating into two congregations in 1979.

Because of this persistent and terrible "tear in the fabric of unity" in our faith, perhaps it behooves us, laymen and clergy alike, to look carefully at conflict and schism and to learn not only the nature of each, but, more importantly, to find ways to handle them in a constructive manner.

II. ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS LEADING TO SCHISM

Recalling and writing about the schism in the Chinese Community Church is a painful matter. It is a sad recollection of facts, opinions, and assumptions. The investigator will endeavor to be as factual as possible. Where opinions and assumptions are made, he will make an effort to identify them as such. As the reader will see, no one involved in the schism was left untouched. No one won; it was a no-win situation.

The seeds of the schism probably began even before the arrival of Rev. Jon Wong to be pastor of the church in late September of 1969. There was contention over his

³Telephone Conversation Interview, Dr. James Chuck, Pastor, First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco, California, December 26, 1979.

salary. He felt that he was offered less than what he was already enjoying in the church he was then pastoring. The matter was resolved and he did come.

Then there was an early incident, again before his arrival at the church in San Diego, which could be interpreted as a portent of future work relationship difficulties with him. The writer of this paper, then Interim Pastor, was authorized by the church to make a long distance phone call to Rev. Wong to inquire as to when he could begin his work with us. Mr. Wong kept hedging and either could not or would not commit himself. This obviously did not sit too well with the Pastor Seeking Committee and other officials of the church.

As time went by, signs appeared to show that the pastoral relationship with various members was rocky, although no real root problems appeared. Small annoying items such as his refusal to establish office hours at the church (he preferred to work from his home); his constant complaints about being overworked and not being supported by church officials or members; his sermons which left many people feeling guilty and depressed because they were often so negative; stories of his failing to visit a dying cancer patient; the tactless manner in which he asked a donor where the money came from; the accusatory way in which he asked why someone did not attend church; his nonsupport of social concerns and community affairs; his failure to support and

attend denominational affairs; and his constant lack of tact in dealing with people, all contributed to his growing unpopularity with certain members of his parish during various times in his nine years with the church.

Nothing happened that would have caused a crisis and resulted in conflict within the church family until February 20, 1978. In a Church Council Meeting held on that date, Mr. Wong walked out of the meeting in protest after the Council had refused to support a recommendation of his to financially help undergird the living expenses of two former members of the church then attending a religious school. In effect, his action said: "Support my request and you're supporting me. Reject my recommendation and you're rejecting me." One of the members of the Board of Christian Education present at the meeting was so upset at Rev. Wong that she remarked in heated tones that she was "sick and tired of his complaints." One may wonder at this time if the walkout of Mr. Wong was symbolic of his eventual departure from the church. However, this incident was the first of several ultimatums he was to hand the church.

The schism started from controversy over the rental and use of the Community Center for a social dance. A local Chinese organization, the Chinese Friends of San Diego, had requested rental of the Center for a dance. The matter was referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration and action at their April 10, 1978 meeting. No decision was

made at that time and the item was referred to the Board of Deacons for further consideration and input. Mr. Wong, however, opposed the rental at the meeting, on the following grounds: (1) the dance would have rock music and such music would be unseemly on church premises; (2) the dance would extend beyond Saturday night to Sunday and that would intrude into the Sabbath; and (3) there would be a charge for admission to the dance and such might jeopardize the tax status of a nonprofit organization such as our church.

At the Deacons' Meeting on April 13, 1978, the pros and cons on the subject of social dancing on church premises were aired and a lengthy discussion ensued. Strong feelings were expressed by those who supported and did not support dancing. Here was the first intimation of the lining up of opposing sides on an issue that was to contribute to an open break within the church family. In summarizing the discussion, the Board did not condemn social dancing or consider it a sinful act as there is nothing in the Bible which explicitly forbids it. However, some of the members of the Board did express the idea that dancing can be a stumbling block to less mature Christians. The major concern over rental of the Center was still the question of the tax factor, yet unresolved. The meeting ended with the Board deciding that in the future it will set up guidelines for those using the Center on Saturday evenings to help keep the proper observance of the Sabbath.

In the meantime, the Chinese Friends of San Diego were anxious about their request for rental of the Center. They said they needed some lead-time to print the tickets so they could hold the dance on a stated date. In order to maintain a good relationship with this group, the Board of Trustees conducted a telephone contingency poll approving the proposed rental of the Center. The decision was made also by the trustees that they would not reveal the results of their action until the next official meeting of the Church Council to, as they said, "avoid adding fuel to the fire."

At the April 24 meeting of the Council, the trustees reported that a commitment to rent to the Chinese Friends of San Diego had been made. Everyone thought at that time that the controversy over social dancing on church premises was settled. But no, at the Trustees' Meeting on May 8, after the trustees had officially sustained the telephone poll on rental of the Center, Mr. Wong informed the Board of Trustees that the issue of dancing was discussed at the Board of Deacons Meeting and that their consensus on the issue was (a) the lust factor, (b) being a stumbling block, and (c) the tax factor.

Not being able to get any official board support for his position, Rev. Wong, I believe, became so frustrated that he decided to resign. And so, for the first time, he verbally submitted his resignation at the April 24 Church

Council Meeting.

Not knowing whether Mr. Wong's verbal resignation was real or whether it was again a device used by him to "intimidate" the officials of the church when he did not "get his way," three trustees and the Moderator of the Church Council met with Rev. Wong in his home on May 9, 1978. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify his earlier verbal announcement to resign. Throughout the discussion, Mr. Wong voiced his dissatisfaction about lack of board support regarding his personal programs and issues.

The trustees' concern at this time was that the pastor not leave at a time when we needed him to coordinate the up and coming Easter activities at the church. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Moderator requested a written letter of resignation be submitted, if resignation was indeed the desire of Mr. Wong.

The Church Council met on May 22, 1978. It was a memorable and stormy meeting. The Rules and Regulations Governing the use of the Community Center came up, and a lengthy discussion arose on the subject of prohibiting dancing at that place. The pros and cons of dancing were recited. Some felt that dancing would be a "stumbling block" to young Christians relative to the style of live they should lead. Others in the group cited past dances held on church premises which showed no evidence of unchristian behavior; in fact, some felt that prohibition would be

a "stumbling block" as it would alienate individuals who enjoy dancing and saw no moral wrong in it. In other words, the sword could cut both ways.

At this point, Rev. Wong then stated his unalterable opposition to dancing.

He announced he would follow through on his May 8, 1978 verbal resignation to the Board of Trustees. He stated that he was taking this action as he felt his spiritual leadership was disputed by the Church boards and the Council.⁴

From May 22 to about May 29, Mr. Wong had second thoughts about his verbal resignations, as he made phone calls as well as personally canvassing certain members of the congregation as to their true feelings about his resignation. He finally decided on his intended course of action and wrote a letter of resignation dated May 30, 1978. This letter was read to the congregation at the service on June 4, 1978. The text of the resignation letter is given in Appendix A of this paper.

On June 5, a Special Congregational Meeting was held (1) to accept the resignation of Mr. Wong; and (2) to authorize and appoint an Interim Pastor and set up a Pastor Search Committee. However, the stated items of business for discussion were tabled by the Moderator. He was in receipt of a letter signed by twenty-one Chinese-speaking members of

⁴Minutes of the Church Council of the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California, May 22, 1978.

the church who were concerned about Rev. Wong's resignation. They believed that he was forced to resign over the dance issue. The text of this letter, translated from the Chinese into English, may be found in Appendix B. This letter requested that a Congregational Meeting be called (1) to call back Rev. Wong as Pastor, and (2) to amend the Church By-laws to prohibit social dancing on church grounds. Since the letter was in Chinese, time had to be spent in translating it into English for those present who were not conversant in Chinese.

Lengthy discussion in the audience arose, as the letter was accompanied by visitors who had no official status in the Council. Opinions were expressed on Biblical standards, the spiritual leadership of the church by the pastor, and the attempted overrule of Church boards.

Finally a motion was adopted to set a Congregational Meeting for June 18, 1978, to consider the two stated business items. The Council was caught completely by surprise by this new turn of events occasioned by the recall letter. The drawing up of sides was now very apparent and real. The two groups were now emerging. A pro-Wong group was made up of the conservative members of the congregation--a coalition of American-born and Overseas-born Chinese officers and members of the church who oppose social dancing on church premises and who are determined to retain Rev. Wong at all costs. An anti-Wong group was made up of mostly liberal

American-born Chinese leaders and members of the parish who were equally determined to get rid of him. This group saw nothing wrong in social dancing either on or off church premises.

In the interval between June 5 and June 18, the date of the impending and fateful Council Meeting, both groups lobbied earnestly to line up people to vote on their side of the issues.

The Secretary of the church xeroxed all the minutes of the different boards dealing with the dance and posted them on the archway wall and by the Community Center. He had hoped to show by the minutes that not all of the conservatives at that time supported Mr. Wong and to dissipate the erroneous rumor that was being circulated that the pastor had been forced to resign.

In answer to this, the pro-Wong forces put up wall signs with biblical references to Jesus driving the money changers out of the Temple. This was a direct slap at the pro-dance group for in the eyes of the anti-dance forces, the former were defiling God's Temple in permitting social dancing on church property.

On June 18, 1978, the fateful Special Congregational Meeting took place. The Moderator provided to those assembled verbal background on the two scheduled business items (recall of Wong and prohibition of dancing on church premises). The petition letter was read and the Moderator

then summarized the different points of view on dancing on church premises as follows:

For Dancing:

1. The time is different than the old days. No place is safer and better than the church to have dancing.
2. Originally the parish hall was built to be a "community center."
3. People with good intentions, who organized the dance, will be offended.
4. As Rev. Fung, Associate Pastor, said: "there is nothing in the Bible which says that we cannot dance or dancing is a sin."

Against Dancing:

1. Even though the parish hall might be built as a community center, however, it does bear the name of the church.
2. I Corinthians 10:23,31 says: "All things are lawful but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful but not all things build up. So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Mark 9:42 says: "Whosoever cause one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea." Finally, I Timothy 4:12 says: "Let no one despise your youth but set the believers an example in speech, and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."⁵

The floor was then open for discussion. The following remarks made by those who were given the floor are here presented to indicate the range of feelings and opinions which came out of the meeting: (1) R.H.--Asked Antony Cheng to point out specifically that the Board of Deacons did not

⁵Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California, June 18, 1978, p. 2.

find dancing sinful; (2) R.I.--Explained that the Trustees had considered the tax liability of rentals; (3) D.H.--Voiced opinion that the Church was part of and for the community; (4) K.S.W.--Asked congregation to follow Biblical standards, otherwise we would not be true to the faith; (5) G.L.--Praised Rev. Wong's service to the Church and stated that the sanctuary was used as such for worship; the Sunday School was used for classes; and that the Community Center properly could be used for community activities; (6) J.S.--stated that when the Church was located on First Avenue, the sanctuary was used for all activities, worship as well as social, and that the Church had not been defiled; (7) C.S.--Provided a personal statement that she disliked the dissension in the Church and was therefore leaving the Church; (8) P.H.--Remarked that the minister must lead the congregation and that Rev. Wong was correct in upholding the Church's reputation; (9) B.S.--Provided history of the Church and stated that the Community Center was built with the intent that it would be a community center.⁶

The questions on the docket were then moved. A question on absentee voting arose. The question was ruled out of order as no constitutional provision exists for absentee voting. The membership roll was then called by the Church Secretary, the ballot distributed, tallied, and the

⁶Ibid., p. 3.

results were certified.

The certified election results were:

1. Shall Rev. Jon Wong be called back as pastor of the Chinese Community Church?

Total votes cast	129
Needed to pass	97
Yes	67
No	58
Abstain	4

(Two No absentee ballots were received by the Secretary but were disallowed.)

2. Shall the By-Laws of the Chinese Community Church be amended to prohibit all social dancing on church premises?

Total votes cast	128
Needed to pass	96
Yes	65
No	62
Abstain	2

(Two No absentee ballots were received by the Secretary but were disallowed.)⁷

The results of the election were then announced and the meeting adjourned. The pro-Wong, anti-dance group (Conservatives) had lost on both counts, failing to achieve three fourths of the total votes cast as required by the Church Constitution to win. The schism was now on its way to becoming full-blown!

III. CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND SCHISM

There was no one single cause which led to conflict and eventual schism within the Community Church. Rather, there were a multiplicity of reasons, both implicit and explicit, which the writer of this paper, who was a close

⁷Ibid., p. 4.

observer of the scene, will now sketch briefly.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the controversy over social dancing on church premises and the resignation and attempted recall of the pastor were the central issues leading to schism. These factors were discussed in section II of this chapter. Other forces played their part in the division and the lining up of sides in the church.

Like all Chinese churches in the United States, the San Diego Chinese Community Church is made up of two distinct contrasting factions. They are the Overseas-born Chinese (OBC) and the American-born Chinese (ABC) members of the church. The gulf between these two groups became more pronounced, especially in the years between 1976-1978, the last three years of Rev. Wong's ministry with the Chinese Community Church.

Now, what are these two groups like? In general, the OBC are theologically conservative, coming from a background of conservatism, whether they be from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or other parts of Asia. Dr. Eddie Lo, a Chinese pastor, has made the following observations about this group:

OBC Christians in the board sense have been very responsive to pietism. They place much emphasis on the inwardness of the Christian life. They stress devotion and inspiration. They love to dwell in the presence of God. Moreover, they bring this into their church services. They attend church primarily to worship and be drawn near to God. They like sermons that comfort and inspire, not those that call them to Christian duty in the world. They compartmentalize their faith. In fact, many of them tend to live a disjuncted life in which faith is separated from conduct. They

will go a long way to hear a moving sermon, but are likely to be indifferent to the needs of their neighbors. They are not aggressive in their confession of Christ before non-Christians.

ABC's on the other hand are more action-oriented. They are quick to act upon what they have heard. They are much more vocal about their faith. They like evangelism. They are capable of responding to appeals for missionary service.

Herein is the gulf. ABC's have the impression that OBC Christians like to talk a lot about mystical and so-called "deeper" truth but are slow when it comes to Christian action and service. In contrast, the OBC impression of ABC Christians is that they are too emotional, too shallow, too devoid of deep spirituality.⁸

In fact, the derogatory remark often made by OBC of ABC is that the latter is "juk sing" (hollow bamboo) or "he has nothing between his ears."

Not only is the OBC theologically conservative; OBCs are also conservative in other areas of their lives.

The most dominant characteristic of the OBC is his essential conservatism. This colors every aspect of his life. To understand fully the role that conservatism plays in Chinese culture one must necessarily view this from the perspective of Chinese education.

The philosophy of education throughout the Orient (and this includes the OBC outside mainland China), is inclined toward authoritarianism. This involves a respect for the elders--for the simple reason they have lived longer than all others. Their experience is broader. They have seen more things and have made many more mistakes. On this basis, it is presumed that they are the wisest segment of the community. The root of this respect may be found in the Confucian teaching of filial piety. This deeply ingrained Chinese respect for the aged and the sage is in striking contrast to

⁸Eddie Lo, "Toward a Greater Cooperation between the Overseas-born Chinese and American-born Chinese" (a paper presented to the North American Congress of Chinese Evangelicals, August 1974), pp. 13-14.

the American father-son relationship in which the father is a pal to his son.⁹

Conservatism as described above has a tendency to breed absolutism. Truth is regarded as permanent, applicable today as to the time when first promulgated, whether it be from Confucius, Mencius, or Jesus Christ. And so a conservative finds himself developing a perspective that is intolerant of the views of others.

The OBC tends to be socially conservative.

OBC's tend to stick together and appear disinclined to intermix with others. One of the major reasons for this perhaps lies in their consciousness of limited language skill. To live in a strange country as a member of a minority people is not an easy task, especially when one has difficulty speaking the language. Whereas these OBC's readily master their technical studies and frequently have excellent reading and writing ability in English, they find great difficulty expressing themselves easily and naturally. This cannot but make them socially withdrawn. No one wants to be embarrassed when they find themselves incapable of engaging in simple English conversation. They repeat themselves unnecessarily and stumble in their attempts to make themselves understood. This cuts across the grain of their conservative mentality, and their pride. In reaction they seek emotional outlet and social companionship almost exclusively with their own kinsmen.¹⁰

In fact, the Cantonese Fellowship was formed as an organization within the Community Church because the OBC felt they wanted a group with which they could readily be identified and at home.

Language is another prime factor in the difference between the ABC and OBC. The ABC often look down upon the

⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

OBC when the latter either have a pronounced accent or find difficulty in speaking the English language. In turn, many ABC cannot speak or understand Chinese and are viewed with a certain amount of contempt by the OBC. They say about the ABC: "You look Chinese; your skin is yellow; why can't you speak Chinese?" Again, a comment from Dr. Lo:

More often than not, the OBC relapses into his own dialect when in the presence of the ABC even though the latter may not understand him. ABC sometimes feel as though they are regarded as non-existent. This careless attitude--both groups fail here--creates more offense than most people realize. Of course, behind this tension lies their basic cultural differences.¹¹

In a comparison of the essential differences between the OBC and the ABC, the following patterns are seen:

1. In terms of their outlook on life, the ABC tend to be liberal and broad-minded. The OBC: conservative, traditional.
2. In their social behavior, the ABC are outward, involved. The OBC: inward, non-involved.
3. In their world perspective, the ABC are aggressive. The OBC: passive.
4. In their relationships with other people, the ABC are individualistic. The OBC: family-centered.
5. In the area of activities, the ABC are pragmatic, goal-oriented. The OBC: relational.¹²

Thus the seeds of polarization were very much present in the body of the Chinese Community Church. This

¹¹Ibid., p. 14.

¹²Wayland Wong, "Reaching the ABCs--Who Are We Working with?" About Face, II, 1 (February 1980) 3.

tension, already present, was intensified by two examples of unresolved conflict.

In the three or four years prior to the schism, more and more of the OBC became members of the Community Church. An affinity was established between Rev. Wong and these "newcomers," so called because most of them had recently arrived from Hong Kong and settled in San Diego. They came to the Community Church because Rev. Wong had what they wanted. They were OBC. Rev. Wong was an OBC. They were conservative. He was conservative. The "old-timers" (some of the ABC members of the church whose affiliation with the church went back several generations), because of alienation with the minister, lack of interest, or lack of commitment, failed to set goals for the pastor or to help guide the church in the direction it should go. In fact, many of these so-called "old-timers" became inactive or dropped out of church life. In this kind of a situation, theological conservatism began to take hold.

These OBC newcomers, mostly from Hong Kong, assumed leadership positions. The ABC abdication of leadership responsibilities made it possible for the OBC to fill the void. Some of the ABC "old-timers" viewed with alarm what they considered the "taking over of their church" by these "newcomers." Their feeling, though not widely expressed, was: "These interlopers had no part in the building of the church. We poured our monies and sweat into it. They are

not only enjoying the 'fruits of our labor,' but are taking over everything!"

This tension between the OBC and the ABC was further intensified when under the leadership and urging of Rev. Wong the question of paying off the mortgage debt to the denomination, relocating the church, and establishing an independent church was considered. The OBC had no denominational loyalty to the United Church of Christ and were not averse to the idea. The ABC were angered at such a proposal since many of them had strong denominational ties and did not want to sever that relationship.

A more serious source of conflict was in the area of authority and power between the pastor and the various boards of the church. Although the responsibilities of both pastor and boards are defined in the Church Constitution, there were occasions when the issue was in the "grey" area. It was in these undefined areas that the pastor felt that his decision should prevail on an issue. According to the Church Constitution, each church officer has one vote on any issue. The pastors are ex-officio and have no voting power. This means that the pastor can only exert whatever personal, moral, spiritual, or intellectual influence he can muster on any question being considered. If an issue is decided on and it turned out to be adverse to his desire, the result is that there is really nothing more the pastor can do about it. That is the democratic process

in action. Rev. Wong, however, could not accept defeat easily. He would continually bring the same matter up again and again in hopes of reversing the decision. This type of behavior soured and disgusted many of the church officers to the point where their working relationship with the minister was endangered.

One member of the Board of Trustees has this to say about Rev. Wong's apparent inability to accept adverse decisions made by the church boards:

Was there a problem? What problem? The problem was that Jon could not rationally work with groups or people who did not believe as he did. The Church Board Meetings became a battle pitting individual with individual and not on the true merits of a particular issue.

With Jon constantly saving his comments for last, many of the officers became apprehensive to voice an opinion that would be "against" Jon's. I became quite annoyed that intimidation was being used. I did not appreciate the approach [he] took during official board/council meetings. His approach centered around what he wanted, not what was best for the church.¹³

And so the many "squabbles" between Rev. Wong and various leaders resulted in a cloud of disharmony hanging over the church. Many church officers became so upset that they left the church. Their feeling was: "Why should I go to church to fight anyone--especially the minister? I don't need that!"

¹³ Respondent No. 2, Questionnaire on Church Schism, August 4, 1980, p. 2.

The role of the minister in the Community Church was another source of controversy. Mr. Wong thought of himself exclusively as a teacher and spiritual leader and refused to engage in such mundane tasks as locking up the church after services, meeting workmen who needed to come to the church to make needed repairs, or being present when deliveries to the church were made. The pastor's practice of working from his home and not maintaining office hours during the work week further made him less accessible when needed. The recurrent complaint was: "Why isn't he at the church when he is needed?" In addition, the trustees felt that the pastor should be at the church some of the time during the week to help look after the church premises. The church is somewhat isolated from the main "drag" and on numerous occasions there had been break-ins, windows broken, vandalism, and thievery.

During his tenure with the Community Church, Rev. Wong's personality was a source of trouble. Mr. Wong was a dedicated man--there is no doubt about that. He had a great impact upon the church during his nine years of service--negatively as well as positively. He consistently taught his congregation to draw closer to God and to serve Him. But no man, however dedicated to Christian service, is without fault. Rev. Wong was no exception. He lacked simple tact and diplomacy in dealing with people. He unfortunately had a rigid personality which often alienated

people. He was reserved and sometimes even cold. He was often abrupt and exhibited a certain degree of inflexibility in doctrinal matters. People had to accept his version and interpretation of the faith or they could be relegated by him to "beyond the pale." One incident comes to mind. This writer was accosted by a former member of the church who had left town. She was almost on the verge of tears. She related how she had just had a talk with Rev. Wong and that he had told her in no uncertain terms that the Hindu religions she was involved with had little or no value for salvation and that the only way to salvation was through Christ and no other. This woman was utterly crushed. Her parting words to this writer were: "I'll never speak to him again about spiritual matters!"

Other comments like the following were made regarding Rev. Wong: "Church members found it difficult to relate to him as he kept himself on a pedestal." One member said: "He is unbending."¹⁴

Again, a trustee who had worked very closely with Rev. Wong during his years with the church had this to say of him:

Criticism was hard for him to accept. What did a layperson know about the pastoral responsibilities and duties? At each pastoral review committee meeting, the critique on Jon was generally favorable. However, a few improvements were addressed. These improvement

¹⁴ Respondent No. 3, Questionnaire on Church Schism, 1979, p. 1.

areas became the crux in which he became annoyed and thus hard to accept. He felt we were not giving him the benefit of the doubt.¹⁵

Mr. Wong's performance as pastor came under fire intermittently right up to the time he resigned. The nature and score of criticisms are described in a report of a Pastor's Evaluation Committee whose findings are here presented as typical of the areas the pastor was thought to need improvement in:

Question: Has Rev. Wong been effective as a minister of the pulpit? Answers: (1) Fair. He is "talking above the mentality of the congregation; (2) No, sermons are too lengthy, does not have a Christian aura of joy about him, conveyance of messages (sermon) are riddled with too many tangents, messages are too often theoretical rather than practical; (3) No. The topics of his sermons do not seem to be relevant to what is going on today. He is not meeting the needs of the congregation.

Question: Has Rev Wong been effective as a minister during hours other than during church service? If not, why not? Answers: (1) Do not know entirely. Do not know what his activities are during those hours except prayer meetings and visiting and calling sick people; (2) No. Does not keep regular "office hours," does not file reports to the Church Council in regards to what his activities are; (3) No. Apparently, the only activity that he does outside of services is to attend the Deacons and CEB meetings. He does not represent the Church in any of the other outside organizations and does little visitation.¹⁶

One of the members of the Evaluation Committee attached a note over and above his answers to his evaluation and made the following additional comments:

¹⁵ Respondent No. 2.

¹⁶ Summarization of Evaluation of Rev. Jon Wong, Pastor's Evaluation Committee, Chinese Community Church,

I also feel that some effort should be made to have the minister set some regular scheduled times when he can be reached at the church where most people who are not members of the church would expect to find a minister when they are in need of one.

It might also be suggested that he put some time in down at the Chinese Service Center on 3rd Avenue during each week to show the people down there that the church is also an active participant in that area.

Rev. Wong does not attend the meetings of the San Diego Association of the United Church any longer so we are therefore without representation in that Association and also, we have lost a means of communication with our fellow churches within the Association in the county.

He also does not attend the meetings of the Ecumenical Conference here in San Diego of which our church is a member and I feel that this would be one area where our church could benefit from his attendance.

In short, I feel that Rev. Wong is doing an inadequate job and should not be given an increase in pay, in fact, he should be held to task to perform his duties in a more effective manner.¹⁷

As has been seen, the leadership style displayed by the pastor was less than acceptable or workable in the Chinese Community Church. In fact, it was counterproductive and caused problems in how the church operated. The term authoritarian may be applied to Rev. Wong's mode of leadership. We shall examine this method of leadership and its consequences in the next chapter of this paper.

Reference has been made earlier in this study to the controversy over the "proper" use of the Community Center, also called the Parish Hall. A member of the Christian Education Board revealed how she felt about this matter this way:

October 30, 1973.

¹⁷Ibid.

As I see the schism, it dealt with the relationship of the role of the church in the community. Rev. Wong felt that the church was to serve only a religious role and that both the Chinese Social Service Center and Chung Hwa were to fill the social role. He had taken the church out of the role of community-centered services to a solely religious role.

The schism was caused by the differences in religious philosophy. The philosophy of Rev. Wong was not compatible with current philosophy of those who were the old church members. People who were not Christians were not welcomed in our church. All the activities were geared to religion, even the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. There was very little allowance for social activities. The stranglehold was getting tighter and tighter. There was more of Rev. Wong implementing his ideas and very little or no allowance of congregational input. The dance issue was the "final straw that broke the camel's back." I wanted allowance for social activity at the church. After all, the community center was established for this purpose.¹⁸

Perhaps the many conflicts the pastor had with various church members and officials of the church would not have come to pass if Rev. Wong had not been mismatched with the church from the very beginning of his pastorate. The Chinese Community Church was basically liberal--coming from a Congregational background from its very beginnings ninety-six years ago. Membership in it was and is not based on conformity to a set of doctrines. Rather, acceptance into this church is based on only two requirements, acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and willingness to be in fellowship with other Christians. The term "Community" was specifically made a part of the church name to indicate that it was open to all protestant Christians,

¹⁸ Respondent No. 3.

regardless of denominational background or religious affiliation. There was no liberal-conservative struggle within the church until Rev. Wong came. The writer of this study, in retrospect, firmly believes that the Community Church made a gross error in not exploring deeper the question of whether Rev. Wong would be compatible with it. Likewise, Rev. Wong, in his opinion, did not "check out" the church adequately when he was being considered as a candidate to fill the pulpit.

Mr. Wong's theological conservatism did not manifest itself to the degree that it became a problem till after some years following his assumption of the pastorate in 1969. The church then was happy to obtain a full-time minister who was willing to take up where the last pastor left off and resume building the church. Securing a bilingual ordained minister was no easy task and the Pastor's Seeking Committee "grabbed" the man whom it thought held the most promise. As time went on, Mr. Wong's theological conservatism began to surface. He started to teach what he called the "fundamentals of the Christian faith"--doctrines he believed were essential for all to believe in if they were to become Christians or to remain as "true Christians." In fact, Mr. Wong took it upon himself to rewrite the Chinese Community Church's covenant (the closest thing to a statement of belief), renamed it as the "Statement of Purpose," and included it as part of the 1976 Membership

Pictorial Directory.

As had been mentioned earlier in this chapter, Rev. Wong's personal ideas and aspirations concerning what a Christian should or should not do or be were not accepted by the liberal elements of the church. He then became unhappy and frustrated. So it is understandable that he started to canvass for the type of individual in the church who possibly would follow him. In the course of from four to five years prior to the schism, Mr. Wong managed to form a "core" group of both conservative ABC and OBC who were sympathetic to him and who supported what he wanted. This was the group he used to offset the liberals whenever the occasion demanded it.

In the meantime, while this was going on, the writer of this paper, the associate pastor of the church, an ABC and a liberal, watched with dismay this movement of the church toward theological conservatism. The associate pastor could not support fully all phases of the church program espoused by the pastor, especially the increasing use of testimonies in the formal morning service, the invitation of the more "fundamentalistic" preachers to speak in various organizations within the church, the substitution of gospel songs for the stately hymns of the church in worship, and diversion of missionary funds for the denomination to independent organizations in Asia. And so a gulf developed between the two pastors. This was a bad situation all

around because the people in the congregation developed divided loyalties in regards to their two pastors, and when the schism did break, the two sides had someone to rally around.

The inability of the church to resolve the aforementioned conflict issues led to and contributed to the schism. It would be well at this time to recapitulate the major sequence of events leading to the split. The church started to split after the pastor terminated his active pastorate on June 7, 1978. This was followed by an attempt to recall Rev. Wong who had resigned. The congregation defeated the recall measure of the pro-Wong forces as well as their attempt to prohibit social dancing on church premises. When this occurred, the pro-pastor forces began to exit from the church. SCHISM!

IV. RESULTS OF CONFLICT/SCHISM

The schism proved to be devastating to the church in many ways. Approximately one half of the congregation left the church. A core group of thirty-two pro-Wong conservatives resigned from their leadership positions and terminated their membership, taking with them a great undetermined number of fellow sympathizers.

The attendance at Sunday morning worship dropped from an average of approximately one hundred fifty per week (first half of 1968) to an average of forty-five the second

half of the year after the schism. This amounted to less than one third of the people who previously attended. The membership roll was reduced from 234 (before the schism) to 141 (after the schism). This was because thirty-two of the conservatives terminated their membership and sixty-one members who had not contributed financially or been active in the church for years were placed on the inactive membership list.

The Sunday School enrollment dropped from 117 (before the schism) to a low of sixty-two (after the schism). This was a reduction of more than one half of the previous total. The Sunday School staff was pared significantly. Of the teachers, 69 percent resigned (most of the teachers were from the conservative group), and the Sunday School was thrown into chaos. In terms of leadership for the church as a whole, the situation was no better, as out of twenty-six officials, sixteen resigned from their offices on the various boards. This was 62 percent of the work force. Many organizations in the church were similarly affected in the loss of attendance at their activities and members.

The choir was temporarily disbanded due to lack of members and the church was not able to have the services of this group for many months. The monthly Evening Service was discontinued. The United Christian Youth suffered problems of morale when their two adult advisors left with the pro-Wong forces. The AYC and the Cantonese Fellowship

ceased to exist, as both were creatures of the conservative forces who had left. The rest of the church paid staff, besides Rev. Wong, resigned also. These included the custodian, choir-director and organist, and church office secretary. The entire Board of Christian Education resigned. In order to meet the educational needs of the church, that Board was merged with the Board of Deacons, the latter to assume the duties of the former until the vacancies could be filled.

Because of the huge gap created by the many conservative officers who resigned their positions, there was anxiety and concern as to whether or not the day-by-day activities of the church could be carried out. So a stop-gap group was formed consisting of a triumvirate made up of the Associate Pastor, the new Moderator of the church (the former Moderator had resigned and gone over to the conservatives), and the Church Secretary. The trio's function was to coordinate and administer the church and keep it viable in the light of the situation. This triumvirate was disbanded when the various vacancies were filled on the different boards and the new pastor arrived.

It might be of interest to note that there was a great deal of vandalism, with eleven large window panels broken in the church sanctuary on May 30 and June 1, the height of the schism. The cost for replacement of those panels was \$2,600. Even though the insurance paid for most

of the replacement, the church was informed that it might be uninsurable in the future or that the insurance premiums might be increased greatly. This was one additional piece of bad news the church did not appreciate at this time. A private detective was hired to investigate the vandalism, but his report was inconclusive. And so one might wonder if the vandalism, which was the worst the church ever experienced, might be connected with the troubles caused by the schism.

The financial picture of the church in the months following the schism from June to December of 1978 did not turn out to be as bleak as one might expect when almost one half of the congregation departed. There was not a corresponding one-half reduction in financial support. True, when one examines the tabulation of Church Income (Table 1, p. 69) for the years 1977-78, one observes that there was a drop in the 1978 total income of \$6,157.39 compared to the total income for 1977. However, the net income for the year 1978 (the year of the schism) was \$2,101.95--a gain, not a loss. This gain was made possible in spite of a one-third drop in the amount of pledges and loose offerings because of three factors: (1) there were no monies spent for the pastor's salary for the rest of the year; (2) expenses for the church were held to a bare minimum; and (3) memorial and special gifts made up the difference.¹⁹

¹⁹Church Financial Records, Chinese Community

Table 1
Church Income for Years 1977-1978

Month	1977 Income		1978 Income	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
January	\$ 5,012.09	\$1,104.40	\$ 7,059.48	\$3,854.61
February	4,337.14	284.52	4,566.79	(1,374.77)
March	3,104.37	(661.26)	3,275.31	(1,032.08)
April	4,373.91	3,175.91	2,711.20	(1,042.88)
May	3,032.13	(1,239.06)	3,346.85	117.55
June	3,393.77	1,160.01	3,061.46	8.24
July	3,432.41	9.38	1,854.07	(2,486.97)
August	2,338.61	(4,689.74)	2,123.05	119.16
September	3,404.31	737.42	2,365.98	(641.36)
October	4,363.28	832.20	2,053.39	356.48
November	4,430.27	849.96	1,837.11	(989.97)
December	6,419.24	3,457.43	7,229.45	5,213.94
Total	\$47,641.53	\$5,021.17	\$41,484.14	\$2,101.95

The above data were compiled from the Church Financial Records of the Chinese Community Church, 1977-1978.

Perhaps the greatest havoc wrought by the schism was in the spirit, heart, and mind of all involved. Lifelong friendships were broken or strained. People chose sides and those who did not were left in limbo. One devoted member of the church was so distraught by the dissension that she took her entire family out of the church, weeping all the way. Another family whose children were very active in the church was split right down the middle in the controversy. Hardly a meal passed without members of the family quarreling with each other at table. People became physically ill as a result of the tensions caused by the schism. The Church Secretary made the following comments on the question of how the schism affected him:

Actually the effect of the schism upon me has not stopped. In the early days I was greatly angered by Wong's action and those of _____. I was disappointed by _____. I was saddened to see _____ leave.

There were many a sleepless night because of the action and some upset stomachs during the summer nadir. To this day, I am not reconciled.²⁰

The mother of the Church Secretary made these comments:

The schism has left scars some of which will be hard to erase. Good friends are on different sides of the fence. Even some brothers and sisters have divided loyalties which is a sad thing. I am a

Church, 1977-78.

²⁰ Respondent No. 1, Questionnaire on Church Schism, 1979.

member of the Ladies Guild and because of what happened some members have left.²¹

As the schism continued through the summer of '78, the gulf between the pro-Wong forces and those who remained with the Church widened. This came about when the "dissidents" formed a fellowship group in the home of one of their members. Later on, this group formed the nucleus of the newly established Chinese Evangelical Church and called Rev. Wong to be its pastor. Competition between this group and the Community Church began right away with the "evangelical fellowship" recruiting existing Chinese Community Church members to go over to their side via phone contacts and personal canvassing. Rev. Wong was contacted by the Moderator and Church Secretary on numerous occasions to return to the Community Church information and files he might have had in his possession when he resigned. This information became important when it was learned that the names and phone numbers of members of the Community Church were being used to canvass for the purposes of the "opposition party." The information requested was not honored. Furthermore, to help lessen the hostility and bad feelings being generated by the phone canvassing of the fellowship group, an attempt was made by the Community Church leaders to set up better

²¹ Respondent No. 4, Questionnaire on Church Schism, 1979.

lines of communication with the rival group. Ground rules were also proposed to facilitate future contact. Little came of either effort, and friction and animosity continued to exist for almost a year.

This ill-feeling must have continued for a long period of time, at least in the hearts and minds of some of the members of the "conservative camp." In December of 1979, a year and a half after the schism erupted, the writer of this paper, in an attempt to be "fair" to the other side, wrote a letter to the former Moderator of the Church Council who had resigned and was a leader of the new Evangelical Church, asking him for the conservative version of the schism. He did not even have the courtesy to reply to the letter of inquiry. In the same spirit of fairness, a letter was dispatched to Rev. Wong in an effort to get his side of the story, to be fair to him, and to get a more "balanced" picture of the whole affair. Mr. Wong at first verbally agreed to write an account, but later refused. His letter in which he declined to discuss the matter is reproduced in Appendix C.

The schism had very much the same negative effects as a marital divorce. There were hurt and ambivalent feelings on both sides, frustration at not being able to solve the conflicts, anger, misunderstandings, harsh words, recriminations, vindictive actions, uncertainty, pain, sorrow, regrets. Most important of all and to our sorrow, this little

segment of God's people, the Chinese Community Church, had failed to "maintain the peace and unity" of His Body. And because of that, all who were involved in the schism need to beg for God's forgiveness.

So far, the negative aspects of the schism have been described. They are not difficult to see. But to pinpoint the positive aspects of the schism may be a more difficult task.

For one thing, after the schism, there is no more polarization of groups within the church. People no longer need to think of themselves as liberals or conservatives, just Christians. The conservatives had gone and they "could be free to do their own thing" and those who remained with the church could do the same.

Interpersonal relations among the church officials improved almost 100 percent at church meetings. They no longer bicker with each other. Of course, there are still differences of opinion on an issue. But these are faced and discussed openly on their own merits. There is no lining up of sides any more. When a decision is made, it is final and no one goes home festering with resentment because his or her view did not prevail.

Church officials could now attend a meeting without fear of being embroiled in a confrontation with the previous pastor. A church leader made this comment about the change in atmosphere:

On the other hand, I feel more energized, peaceful, as well as burdened these days. Without the change in the pulpit, I could have seen myself drop out of the church. Now new possibilities have opened that I did not know existed. Because of these events, I've gotten closer to God and to others.²²

People who had left the church because of personal feelings against the previous pastor began to return and become active in its program and outreach. One church leader puts it this way:

The schism has brought back old members who objected to Rev. Wong's doctrines or felt uncomfortable with him. Many members have gained renewal of old friendships with old members returning. The church is becoming a center for more social activities in comparison to the past nine years. There are more activities that were not allowed in the past. There is less tension and less aggravation. I don't feel I'm being judged by my behavior. Now I can enjoy the activities without feeling guilty. The schism has made those members who remained feel more united and caused them to work closer together to make the church strong and viable.²³

The schism was, in a certain sense, a blessing in disguise. It opened the way for the Chinese Community Church to move in new directions, to grow and to move ahead. The following list of events, additions, and changes in the life of the church, although not in any way exhaustive, is indicative of the positive manner in which the church is moving forward. From July 1978 to the present (1981), the following important things have happened in the church:

²² Respondent No. 1.

²³ Respondent No. 2, p. 2.

1. Hired a new church choir director and organist whose orientation was not "Gospel" but more liturgical and classical in background.
2. Sunday Morning Worship was more liturgical and stately--no more "free expression" during the services, nor testimonies.
3. A Chinese surgeon donated \$500 for a scholarship fund to train the young people for church leadership in the liberal tradition.
4. Hiring of a full-time pastor who is liberal in theology and active in social concerns.
5. The ministers and congregation are now more involved in denominational activities. For the first time in the history of the church, the pastor and a layman went as delegates to a meeting of the UCC Synod, our denomination's highest governing body.
6. Missionary support to the denomination was reinstated and previous missionary funds were no longer allocated to support various evangelical Chinese groups in Asia.
7. Social dancing was no longer a problem in the church.
8. A new Stewardship Council and plan were formed to upgrade support for the finances of the church.
9. A study is being conducted to determine the feasibility of building a retirement home with church monies on the property of the church to house Chinese senior citizens who need low-cost housing.
10. A Pastoral Relations Committee was formed to provide for better relations between the pastor and congregation. If such a body had been operating in the

administration of Rev. Wong, much of the troubles between him and various members of the congregation might have been resolved before they reached explosive proportions.

11. Installed a \$2,000 burglary and alarm system to protect the church from vandals.
12. Established a mission church to meet the spiritual needs of ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam in the Linda Vista area. A part-time graduate student was hired to assist the pastor in this new parish. Funds to undergird came entirely from denominational headquarters, as well as from concerned sister UCC churches in San Diego.
13. Installation of a telephone-answering machine in the pastor's office. This device will enable people who wish to contact the pastor when he is not on the premises to do so. The current pastor now works from the church. He has regular office hours there and is very accessible to whoever needs him.
13. The current pastor does not use the pulpit as a vehicle to scold people--a decided and welcome change.
15. Set aside one Sunday of each year in the church calendar for the observance of Chinese Cultural Weekend. This event allows for all segments of the Chinese community in San Diego to express pride in their identity and cultural heritage under the umbrella of the church. When this celebration is held, it helps to offset the previous allegation that the church was only interested in promoting religious events and was just concerned in

propagating itself with absolutely no regard for the other legitimate interests of Chinese people.

16. The current pastor is very much an integral part of the Chinese community. He is a board member of the Chinese Language School as well as the church representative to the Chinese Social Service Center and other community organizations.

And so the Chinese Community Church is able not only to remain viable as an institution, but actually is "going great guns!" It has moved from a position of great uncertainty to one of strength and purpose and, under God's guidance, will continue to do so.

CHAPTER IV

CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

I. NATURE AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Definition of Conflict

What is conflict? One definition says:

Conflict is an intense, serious disagreement on major issues among two or more parties. A high degree of polarization takes place among hostile camps. Relationships are damaged or destroyed and disagreement over the issues is converted into hostility and possible violence toward the antagonist.¹

Ross Stagner says conflict is "a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other, but not by both."² In other words, conflict involves a struggle for control and power over a group or within the organization.

But perhaps the best definition of conflict was given by G. Douglas Lewis, an ordained Methodist minister and Director of the D.Min. project at Hartford Seminary Foundation in Connecticut. He said:

There are two key elements in conflict. First, there is always a box or space both parties want to occupy. The box represents whatever they are competing for: material goals, opportunities for advancement, recognition, status, territory, or the attention

¹Edward O. Moe, (Controversy and Conflict (Cincinnati: Board of Missions, Methodist Church, 1964), p. 3.

²Ross Stagner (Comp.) The Dimensions of Human Conflict (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 136.

of others. The second element is the intention or goal of each party. If either did not want to occupy the space or the box, there would be no conflict. I define conflict as two or more objects trying to occupy the same space at the same time.³

Kinds of Conflict

There are three major ways in which conflict is experienced: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and substantive.⁴ Intrapersonal conflict is that struggle which a person has within himself. It may be a struggle a person has in trying to determine whether or not he will pay his income to Uncle Sam this year or it may be different feelings warring with each other within that person.

Another type is interpersonal conflict often found in churches. It has to do with differences between people but not related mainly to issues. This type of conflict is generated by how one feels about another. An illustration of this type of conflict is a situation in which one is in conflict with another simply because the other is young or old, black or white, Catholic or Protestant.

A third type of conflict is substantive. Substantive conflict has to do with conflicts over values, facts, methods, issues, ends. Substantive conflicts can be

³ G. Douglas Lewis, Resolving Church Conflicts (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 5.

⁴ Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus, Church Fights (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p. 29.

between groups, between two individuals, or between an individual and a group.

It is important that we differentiate among the three forms of conflict, for there are different kinds of methods to deal with different kinds of conflict. Intrapersonal conflict is best dealt with through personal counseling, study, therapy, utilized to effect individual change. Interpersonal conflict can also be dealt with through counseling and therapy, and other methods such as sensitivity training, education, confrontations, and encounter groups. Ways to defuse substantive conflict will be dealt with at length in this study later.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Conflict

Conflict can be either positive or negative. First, the positive aspects. Conflict is an important agent of social interaction. It is not just a negative factor that "tears apart" but may contribute to the maintenance of group and the tying together of interpersonal relations.

Georg Simmel, a classical social theorist, insisted that "conflict is a form of sociation" and that a certain amount of discord, inner divergence, and outer controversy are "organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together."⁵

⁵Georg Simmel, Conflict: The Web of Group

Lewis Coser, well-known contributor to the theory of the conflict model of society, claims that conflict provides for change:

Conflict prevents the ossification of social systems by exerting pressures for innovation and creativity; it prevents habitual accommodations from freezing into rigid molds and hence progressive impoverishing the ability to react creatively to novel circumstances. The clash of values and interests, the tension between vested interest groups and new strata demanding their share of wealth, power, and status are all productive of social vitality.⁶

Conflict is a fact of life. It occurs because we human beings have differences in perceptions and come from various backgrounds. All of us, as the social scientists say, have different "frames of reference"--we see things differently. If this is so, is it therefore so surprising that we may disagree often over issues and problems? When Christians come to church, they do not and cannot leave their conflicts behind, even though the common assumption is that the church is "a place of peace and quiet."

And so we can expect to find conflict in the church. And if we find it there, we need not "run scared" and see ourselves as failing spiritually; rather the conflict may be a sign of health. Hamby puts it this way:

Affiliations (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1908, 1953, pp. 17-18.

⁶Lewis Coser, "Conflict Theory," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan, 1968), III, 235.

A church without conflict is usually one that has not been dealing with vital issues and is largely irrelevant to modern life, or one that has been stifled by a pressure for conformity. In the latter case, homogeneity is put forth as the only value in human relationships. Members are led to conform to the opinions of the authorities for fear of being isolated and expelled from the fellowship. This is regrettable from our standpoint, since the growing edge of the Christian life is not found in conformity to authoritarianism but in expressed doubt, tension, and differences.⁷

How can conflict be constructive in a church? Conflict can be the opportunity for advancement when people grow in their ability to accept and respect the opinions of others, avoid hatred, anger and rancor, and move toward reconciliation beyond the differences that divide them.

Don Dodson asserts that conflict may offer the experience of reconciliation--a basic teaching of the church:

If God alone is Lord of the conscience, and if being in Christ can permit Christians, while retaining their self-interest, to rise above it, then healthy, expressed conflict can actually enhance the peace, unity, and purity of the church. It can make reconciliation an experience, as well as a doctrine, in the life of the church.⁸

Leas and Kittlaus say there are four major areas in the life of an organization, especially churches, where conflict plays a most positive role--a role that is helpful to the maintenance of a group, assists the group in

⁷Charles P. Hamby, "Conflict in the Local Church: Its Causes and Creative Resolution" (unpublished Rel.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1965), p. 6.

⁸Ibid., p. 8.

accomplishing its mission, and is life enhancing. They are: empowerment, establishing identity, unifying the in-group, and bearing the intolerable.

The first major positive function of conflict is that it energizes and gives empowerment to group life. When the amount of threat, or tension, or anxiety in an organization is low, there is no sense of urgency, no necessity to look for alternative ways of behaving, and no incentive for conciliatory overtones. In a marriage you might hear one of the partners saying that the other takes him or her for granted in this kind of situation. In a church the membership is described as apathetic. With no sense of dissatisfaction, with no vision of a better way of life, or to do things, with no pain, there is very little chance that there will be any action.⁹

The second thing conflict can do is to help the group establish identity and set boundary lines:

The church has used conflict as a means of establishing its identity from its very inception. "He who is not against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matt. 12:30). Obviously, Jesus was using conflict to differentiate between those who were in the "ingroup" and those who were in the "outgroup."¹⁰

A third positive function of conflict is that it helps to unify the in-group:

In a conflict situation each contestant tends to play down the differences that exist within his own group and it becomes more effective as a task group. There is a negative side to this, however. The in-group tends to let the traditional leadership patterns dominate rather than to risk an "in-house struggle and dissipating energy on the question of who would be the best leader at this time. The ingroup also tends to overlook its own inadequacies and see only the

⁹ Leas and Kittlaus, pp. 35-36. ¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

inadequacies of its opponent or opponents.¹¹

Lastly, conflict provides a means that makes it possible for us to stand up against and bear otherwise intolerable circumstances:

Conflict in itself can be a release, a means by which we are able to bring within the limits of toleration that which would be unbearable. One group of men in a particular denomination were outraged by their church's silence on the war in Southeast Asia. If it had not been possible for this group to confront its denomination, to make demands for change, and to try to organize churchmen to change their stand on this issue, these men would not have stayed in the church. The very fact that they could challenge, cajole, and threaten their denomination meant they would stay there and give it their support in other areas of their common life together.¹²

When is a church experiencing the negative effects of conflict? It may be when its leadership and membership are immobilizing the church and not fulfilling its mission because of disintegrating, dysfunctional, and dissociating conflicts: "disintegrating," where the church is using up its resources (losing members, money, and energy) on unhealthy conflict; "dysfunctional," where it is spending its energy on nonproductive issues; and "dissociating," where it is experiencing the agony of interpersonal hostility.¹³

Again Hamby:

Conflict becomes destructive when its dynamic course is restrained and persons are caught in a reciprocal deterioration of respect for one another. Before they realize what is happening, they are reflecting hostile attitudes, repeating gossip, leveling charges, and

¹¹Ibid., p. 40. ¹²Ibid., p. 41. ¹³Ibid., p. 16.

denouncing people, which in their better moments, they would know ^{is} unbecoming to persons in a Christian fellowship.¹⁴

Julia T. Wood, an associate professor of speech at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and small group facilitator, has put the essential differences between constructive and destructive conflict in the following succinct manner:

Distributive or disruptive conflict occurs when participants do not understand the value of conflict and do not have or do not use constructive means of channeling it to deliberations. In a distributive situation there is a competitive climate: members perceive the disagreement as a game in which someone will win and others must lose. In distributive situations members tend to employ such defense mechanisms as aggression, withdrawal, repression, or projection of blame onto others. Members tend to become locked into their own viewpoints and are unwilling even to consider the possible values of others' ideas. Frequently, in distributive situations, members will resort to personal attacks instead of focusing their disagreement on the issues.

By contrast, integrative or constructive conflict develops when members understand the utility of disagreement and when they have acquired methods of managing conflict effectively. In integrative situations there is high team spirit and commitment to group goals. Members assume that their disagreements stem from sincere involvement with the common problem and that by discussing the differing ideas they will eventually come to an agreement that is better than any one individual's initial suggestions. In integrative situations members are cooperative toward each other. They tend to be supportive of other's ideas and open to considering the merits of opinions different from their own. Disagreements are confined to the issues and do not involve personalities.¹⁵

¹⁴Hamby, p. 7.

¹⁵Julia T. Wood, "Constructive Conflict in Discussions: Learning To Manage Disagreements Effectively"

Causes of Conflict

Conflicts in the church may arise from any cause and from many issues. It may arise from lack of information and communication and someone's getting the wrong idea about something and becoming disturbed. It might surface when people with deep latent prejudices and opinions become irritated when the issues are discussed. Conflict may evolve when something occurs which disrupts the equilibrium of a group and insecurity, uncertainty, and fear erupt.

Conflict may be initiated when there are incorrect and false expectations of the Church in social action--the conservative Christians desiring to maintain the status quo and the liberal Christians being action-orientated. It may start from personality clashes between two persons discussing a problem. It may result from pressure applied on Church officials by individuals in the church who have certain political, social, or economic ideas about what can or cannot be done in church. It may originate from agitation and propaganda from outside elements of the church.

Conflict may start because certain individuals have deep unresolved ego needs which make them conflict prone. It may proceed from the basic differences in the theologies

(xeroxed material passed out to participants at the Seminar on Creative Management of Congregations in Conflict, Institute of Changing Ministries, UCLA, April 7, 1981), 5 pp.

of Christians. This lies in the area of value conflicts. The conservative-evangelicals consider Christianity in terms of personal morality, and often little else. In opposition, the liberal Christian believes that the demonstration of faith goes beyond personal morality to exercising action to remove the social injustice in a society. Often, these two disparate views bring about conflict.

A source of conflict between ministers and lay church people lies in the inability of both to operate together as an integrated team rather than as independent, and perhaps at times opposing forces.

Speed Leas, a United Church of Christ minister, recently made a study of why ministers were dismissed by their congregations. This report examined 117 churches in four denominations which fired their senior ministers within the last three years. He reports:

Ministers are "involuntarily terminated" for a variety of reasons, but a primary one is congregational conflict which existed before the pastor's arrival, the study says. Some 43 percent of the churches examined fall into this category. Among difficulties cited are the presence of factions within the church; disapproval of the minister by a powerful minority; unwillingness or inability of the congregation to identify problems early; goals, norms and values disagreement between laity and pastor; and frustrated desires of members for big successes in the church's ministry.

Interpersonal difficulties are another major cause for clergy dismissals, according to the study. Authoritarian behavior or contentiousness accounts for 23 percent of all firings, and 23 percent are attributed to poor interpersonal skills. Among the latter are the inability of the minister to understand the congregational situation and his or her impact upon it; difficulties with delegating or accepting responsibility;

the use of divisive rather than integrative tactics with members; problems with self-expression; the need for constant emotional support or inability to provide it to others; and the tendency to feel threatened by differences.¹⁶

This study concludes with recommendations for more denominational awareness and support for pastors and churches that experience minister-member conflict.

What then are the basic roots of human conflict?

G. Douglas Lewis sums it up most appropriately when he says:

The roots of human conflict are to be found in the soil of human nature. One root is our intentional, purposeful nature; a second, our perceptual framework determining the choice of goals important to us; a third, our social nature. We are social beings whose goal fulfillment is achieved in an environment that includes other persons. There we also discover the goals of others claiming the space we intend to occupy.¹⁷

Conflict and Our Faith

The Christian faith proclaims and insists that God did not create us just for an existence of conflict without redemption. God instead has created us for wholeness, fulfillment--for fellowship with Him and with each other. From experience we know that wholeness is never complete in this life, yet that quest, that hope pushes us onward. The Apostle Paul images this condition, that is, to know and to

¹⁶Barbara J. Martyn, Southern California Conference of the United Church of Christ, Pastoral Letter, January 1981, pp. 12-13.

¹⁷Lewis, p. 11.

do God's will perfectly, for in doing so we are fulfilled and made whole:

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a new freshness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.¹⁸

Love is the accepted norm for a Christian's life. Does the biblical concept of fitting together disallow the presence of conflict? No, I do not believe so. However, many Christians interpret conflict as the opposition of love and so they shun any appearance of conflict as un-Christian.

But what does it mean to love another, whether neighbor or enemy? Putting it in the context of that which makes us unique persons, G. Douglas Lewis says:

We are intentional and goal-directed, guided by what is important and fulfilling to us, and we choose our goals and ascribe their appropriateness from our own unique perspective. First and foremost, then, to love another is to affirm the right of that person to have goals, to have intentions, and to have a unique perspective. The biblical text asserts that God's love is all-inclusive. God's love affirms all persons, not just those who agree with us, whose goals and actions we support and regard as right; Christian love means to affirm and support all persons.¹⁹

And so when we exhibit love in conflict with others, we are actually moving toward psychological unity or wholeness with them. Therefore, conflict is understood in this light, as an unique opportunity for growth.

¹⁸Romans 12:2.

¹⁹Lewis, pp. 31-32.

II. CONFLICT AND STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership Patterns

The manner in which a leadership uses its power in a group has great implications in terms of a sense of creativity in that group, whether or not there will be success in accomplishing goals and the occurrence and management of resolution of conflict.

The Authoritarian Style

The authoritarian style gives the least amount of freedom and responsibility to members of the group because the decision-making function lies in the hands of the leader, who makes a unilateral decision. Usually the leader's orders are conveyed down to his followers, who then are expected to follow them completely without any dissent.

Authoritarian leadership, from a moral viewpoint, is the least desirable because it violates the fulfillment of human selfhood. The leader who follows this path violates his own essential humanity because of an exaggerated sense of self-importance and superiority.²⁰

Psychologists like Adorno and his colleagues tell us that an authoritarian's manner grew out of a defective

²⁰Hamby, p. 111.

upbringing and consequent immaturity; yet the authoritarian does not understand this and has a wrong image of himself and others.²¹

Authoritarianism when practiced hurts its followers because it violates the free expression of an individual by making him subservient to the authority figure. Creativity is repressed--the follower is denied the opportunity to make any free choice. When free choice is obliterated, it often leads to a morale problem within the group. When people are suppressed, they often rebel. This rebellion often takes the form of suppressed hostility, which, in turn, finds expression in aggressiveness and irritability toward fellow members of the group and the leader himself.

Unfortunately, church people often accept authoritarian leadership because of two things: (1) they believe that the pastor "knows best"; or (2) they are confused because "they are taught that the morality of a cause is more important than the fulfillment of selfhood and that both values cannot be realized at the same time."²²

The Democratic Style

In the democratic style of leadership, the decision-

²¹T. W. Adorno, et al., The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 240.

²²Hamby, p. 112.

making power and function are placed in the group. Again

Hamby:

Democracy means that authority is derived from the will of the people. The word was formed from the Greek root demos, the people, joined with the word kratos, authority. This is to say that all who must abide by decisions, follow rules, and carry out progress should have a part in their creation. Members of the group contribute their ideas, feelings, preferences, and decide between alternative approaches to the solution of problems.²³

Lippitt and White, in their classic study of leadership styles and their effects discovered that the group using the democratic style was the more efficient in accomplishing group objectives and goals. The studies revealed that the democratic style brings about more friendliness, cooperation, and mutual helpfulness. When these qualities are present in a group, they are more able to move forward in attaining goals. In contrast, the authoritarian leadership style causes dissent, frustration, and aggressiveness, qualities which do not help the group move forward toward achievement of aims.²⁴

The Authoritarian Style and the Authoritarian Personality

The authoritarian mode of leadership is for the most part exhibited by the authoritarian personality. What is

²³Ibid., p. 113.

²⁴Ronald Lippett and Ralph K. White, "An Experimental Study of Leadership and Group Life," in Readings in Social Psychology (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 347.

the authoritarian personality like? Hamby lists and describes certain basic patterns of behavior which identify such people. He states that authoritarian personalities: (1) have a "closed-orientation" toward life--they are rigid and unable to be open-minded toward new understandings, insights, evidence, and considerations; (2) invariably harbor strong underlying aggressive impulses which cause them to make unconscious attempts to prove their competence and power to themselves and to others. They try to dominate others and to do everything themselves when they are members of a group; (3) are prejudiced and generally think in stereotyped terms of people at a distance from themselves socially. Persons in a minority group, for instance, become suspect and often scapegoats for all the troubles that the "in-group" suffers. It is again the old story of "people who aren't like us are bad"; (4) have a tendency to overemphasize the power-motif in human relations. If they get involved in a conflict, the modus operandi is "beat the other guy down"; (5) tend to be legalistic. They are most often fascinated by rules, regulations, and the "letter of the law." Church constitution and by-laws can become more than guidelines for them; they quite often become inflexible arbitrators of right and wrong; (6) cast social, religious, and political issues in axiomatic terms. Everything is seen in terms of black or white, and rarely in shades of gray. Therefore points of contention are

generally considered as totally in error or defended as altogether right and good. Obviously anyone with this attitude is unable to compromise--a necessary ingredient toward the solution of any problem.²⁵

Style of Leadership Best for a Parish

What style of leadership should a pastor adopt in order to be an effective leader in his parish? According to Seifert, "He is neither autocratic nor a milquetoast."²⁶ He is neither a despicable dictator who manipulates his people in totalitarian style nor is he an ineffectual non-entity. Seifert says:

The case for a "middle-road" democratic leadership is still unassailable. Abundant research shows that this approach is particularly superior when, as in the case of the church, the goal is the changing of attitudes. Such growth is more likely to be real and lasting if it comes as a result of personal participation in a group-reinforced decision. In the short run, for certain types of routine or emergency projects more work may be done when someone issues orders that others obey. Yet in activities like planning or carrying through programs, more is accomplished in the long run under democratic leadership. Among reasonably mature persons, democracy may sometimes be slower, but it is also sounder.

Under democratic conditions, there are likely to be more total-need satisfactions, a wider range of personal growth. Group relations tend to be more harmonious and cooperative among those with genuine

²⁵Hamby, pp. 28, 29, 31, 32.

²⁶Harvey Seifert, "The Uses and Abuses of Ministerial Leadership," Pulpit Digest, LXIV (September 1963) 25.

opportunities to participate. The leader who makes the decisions also manufactures resentment and discontent. Followers are likely to slap at each other when they cannot strike back at an autocrat.²⁷

To many people, the image of the democratic leader is that of one who is inefficient and ineffectual. Seifert points out that this picture is a caricature. Rather, the democratic leader

. . . neither browbeats verbally nor abstains from responsible declaration. He neither rigs the situation to gain his own ends nor allows group plans to be frustrated by his lack of administrative vigor. He is a member of a team, sharing in a decision. He is an administrator within the framework of group policy. Such a balanced contribution by minister and people paves the road to exciting interaction, creative planning, and the release of fuller spiritual power.²⁸

Hamby undergirds Seifert's plea for the necessity of a pastor to practice democracy:

A pastor who is equalitarian shares power, knowledge, responsibility, and mutual respect for others in the congregation. He is democratic when he uses approaches and methods which release the creative energies in the lives of others. Rather than debating in his mind as to whether he can make a given decision, he is asking if it is possible to find a group to make it. He purposely avoids the concentration of authority in his person and makes every effort to diffuse responsibility throughout the church. He is open-minded and not so sure of the correctness of his opinions. He is approachable on any subject and strives to be fair-minded in his judgments.²⁹

A pastor who exercises democratic leadership will be more likely to find success in accomplishing goals. He is able to extend a sense of creativity in the group. He

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁹ Hamby, pp. 125, 126.

can bolster group morale and assist in resolution of conflict.

III. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: NECESSITY, MEANING, GOALS, AND TECHNIQUES

Necessity and Unfolding Pattern

Conflict is inevitable, whether in personal or group life. If it is a fact of life, then we must come to an understanding that if we do not manage conflict, it will manage us!

Coleman, in his monograph on community conflict reports that in any public situation, apart from any intention of the parties involved, conflict has a strong tendency to unfold in the following predictable manner:

1. An issue is presented.
2. The issue disrupts the equilibrium of community relations.
3. Previously suppressed issues come to the surface.
4. More and more of the opponents' beliefs enter the disagreement.
5. The opponents appear totally bad.
6. Charges are made against the opponents as persons.
7. The dispute becomes independent of the original disagreement.

During this process, a number of critical developments tend to take place. First, the definition of the issues changes from specific to general. Then new issues come into the debate, issues that may have been closely related or nearly unrelated to the original issue. Gradually antagonism replaces disagreement. Since it is more comfortable psychologically to see the opponent as totally bad, the antagonism increases to a point of total personal animosity. At the same time, changes take place in the social organization of the parties. Relationships among opponents wither away, and the community becomes polarized. Ad hoc combat groups are

formed to replace the more compromising permanent institutions. Radical leaders emerge and begin a process of propaganda and demagoguery. The normal channels of communication break down, and the combatants increasingly receive information through unreliable word-of-mouth communication. In short, the conflict situation moves toward maximum intensity and polarization.

The second fundamental assumption about conflict progression is that this cycle of intensification and polarization is not inevitable. If these patterns can be broken, then the conflict can be channeled into more constructive paths. The obvious fact, however, is that the dangerous cycles can only be broken by conscious decision and effort. In other words, conflict will tend to get out of control unless the group plans how to manage it. The positive functions of conflict may be forfeited unless there is "conflict management" in the form of prior controls or determined interventions in the actual conflict. Since we have argued that conflict is unavoidable for the church, it becomes important to determine whether the church has adequate attitudes toward the tools for conflict management.³⁰

Meaning of Creative Conflict Management

Conflict must be managed, and it can be managed creatively. Creative conflict management refers to the application of the methods and techniques by which conflict is resolved constructively; its detrimental effects avoided or lessened, and growth, change, and development are maximized in individuals involved in the conflict.

Lewis defines creative conflict management in the following manner:

Creative conflict management means forging new relational possibilities, new alternatives for action that presently do not exist and that are satisfying

³⁰ Robert Lee and Russell Galloway, The Schizophrenic Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 176-177.

to both parties. The goal of creative conflict management is to enable both parties to achieve what is vital and important to them.³¹

Principles of Creative Conflict Management

After defining the meaning of creative conflict management, Lewis then lists and describes seven basic principles for creative conflict management. They are:

1. Help others feel better about themselves. Persons and organizations manage conflict best when they are feeling good about themselves.
2. Strive for effective communication. Effective communication consists of in-depth and reflective listening and sending with the knowledge that one's perceptions and messages are uniquely one's own.
3. Examine and filter assumptions. Unexamined assumptions contribute to destructive conflict.
4. Identify goals, what is wanted. Identifying what a person, group, or organization is trying to accomplish, what is wanted, in a situation is essential in conflict management.
5. Identify the primary issue. Until the primary issue has been identified and acknowledged by the principal parties in the conflict, it is difficult to manage the conflict.
6. Develop alternatives for goal achievement. Search for alternatives which will allow all parties to achieve that which is important and fulfilling to them.
7. Institutionalize conflict management processes. To be effective conflict management processes must be institutionalized and not created for special occasions. The term institutionalized is a way of talking about building into an organization or a social system those processes, procedures, and structures that facilitate the management of conflict when it does arise.³²

³¹Lewis, p. 49.

³²Ibid., pp. 49-69.

Styles of Conflict Management

Lewis next presents five styles of conflict management he has identified. He defines "styles of conflict management" as "those identifiable patterns of personal behavior which tend to be repeated in certain conflict situations."³³ These styles of conflict management are:

1. Win/Lose. Characterized by a high concern for achieving personal goals in a conflict even at the risk of damaging or destroying the relationship with the other party. "Win at all costs; the relationship be damned," is the byword of this style.
2. Accommodation. Characterized by a high concern for preserving the relationship in the conflict even at the price of giving up the accomplishment of one's own personal goals. Fearful that the conflict might damage the relationship.
3. Compromise. Assumes we cannot get everything we want in a conflict. Better to "give a little, get a little." Push for some of your goals but do not push so hard as to jeopardize the relationship. Allow the other party to get some of what they want.
4. Avoidance. Characterized by a hopelessness about conflict. Assumes we cannot accomplish personal goals or preserve the relationship in conflict. Best policy is to withdraw and avoid if possible.
5. Win/Win. Combines high concern for the accomplishment of our goals with high concern to enhance the relationship. Assumes both parties can achieve their goals in the situation and works toward that end.³⁴

Before Lewis formulated the styles of conflict management just discussed above, he had worked out some theoretical assumptions upon which these styles are based. They are:

³³ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 107-108.

1. Every person, group, or organization copes with and manages conflict. That management takes the form of a variety and combination of styles.
2. All styles are appropriate depending on the context and issues. Every person uses all the styles to some degree, but will tend to have a dominant style, using the others to varying degrees as backup styles.
3. The typology of styles is built around the recognition of two factors in every conflict: (1) the goals each party is trying to achieve in the situation; and (2) the relationship the conflicting parties have with each other.
4. The style adopted is determined by the relative concern a party has for these two factors in that particular conflict.³⁵

If one were to put the five styles of conflict management on a sliding scale, with the least desirable on one end and the most desirable on the other end, Win/Lose would fall on the former end and Win/Win on the latter.

How then does one maximize ways of managing any conflict so that "everybody wins"? Win/Win is, of course, the most coveted way to manage conflict. Here are some suggestions:

1. Begin with clear, high performance goals. If there is no standard against which to measure the usefulness of a decision, the solutions will tend to be subjective and personal.
2. Share information up and down the organizational structure. Bad data produces bad decisions which usually produce bad feelings.
3. Model appropriate problem-solving approaches. If the leadership makes unilateral decisions or uses its position to win arguments, the rest of the organization will do the same.
4. Model a listening ear. A great deal of emotion is spent in attempting to be heard. If I don't believe you understand my position, how can I accept yours?

³⁵ Ibid.

5. Focus on facts, not emotions. Christian organizations and Christian leaders can unknowingly become very manipulative by appealing to loyalty, "the cause," or biblical ideals which may have little bearing on the problem at hand.
6. Give training in group problem-solving. Many people resort to a bulldozer style of settling differences because that's the only way they know.
7. Insist on facts, or at worst, clearly differentiate between facts and opinion.
8. View problems as a deviation from a goal. What is the goal to which this problem relates? The task of the group then becomes to discover solutions that enable the goal rather than to enhance the individual.
9. Break down the problem-solving process into data-gathering, alternative solutions, trade-offs between solutions, compromise (integrating solutions), and final decision.
10. Seek to strengthen the power of the group. The opposite side of the coin is to avoid enhancing the power of one contestant. Keep asking the question, "How can this problem (conflict) be used to everyone's benefit?"
11. Agree to agree. The primary tool of the labor arbitrator is to obtain agreement from both parties that agreement is possible and will eventually occur.
12. Promote listening. We haven't been heard until the other person can accurately state our view. This takes time, patience and a sense that the individual is just as important as the issue at hand.³⁶

Understanding and Changing One's Style

It is important for one engaging in conflict resolution to be made aware of his own style so that he can make some sense of his own actions--to determine what styles are appropriate for the occasion.

³⁶"Twelve Suggestions for Parishes on Managing Conflict," Today's Parish, n.d., pp. 25-26.

There are three possible ways to do this: (1) keeping a journal which is an orderly reflection in one's head. Certain patterns will emerge if we remember our history in chronological sequence--the kinds of conflicts engaged in and the various styles used. (2) Next, we need an unbiased loving critique from others in which they share with us how they perceive our actions to impinge upon them. (3) Finally, we could use a psychological instrument such as the Conflict Management Survey³⁷ to provide additional data. This Survey reveals how a person is likely to act in a conflict situation. Moreover, it can provide a conceptual framework within which to organize the information about one's style.

Is it possible for one to change one's conflict management style? The answer is yes, but it is difficult and involves risk. Lewis proposes six stages in a change process:

1. Identify your current conflict management styles and how you use them in different settings. Are you satisfied with them?
2. Identify which style it is you want to change and to what.
3. Identify what behaviors would be characteristic of the new style. What actions would enable you to do and be who you want to be?
4. Practice these behaviors first in settings that have lower risk and are supportive.
5. Practice these behaviors in daily settings.

³⁷ Jay Hall, Conflict Management Survey (1969) (Teleometrics, Conroe, Tex.).

Develop means of getting feedback on the impact of your actions.

6. Are you satisfied with the results? If so, reinforce or support these new behaviors so that they become natural patterns of action.³⁸

A Case Study Approach for Conflict Resolution

An exceedingly helpful mode for understanding the resolution of conflict (including church conflicts) is to analyze case studies involving conflict. The second half of Lewis's book Resolving Church Conflicts presents ten cases as "slices of life" in which one can practice theory. The idea is that understanding and practicing the applications in these cases can help us to move from theory to life.

Again Lewis:

Each case has conflict within it. The cases are diverse, providing various types of conflict, varying issues, and multiple settings, while focusing on different areas of ministry. The cases are intended to be normal rather than the exceptional or exotic. The conflict issues are often subtle rather than overt. In short, these cases, all of which were actual events though somewhat disguised here, are intended to provide the users with settings, analogous to their own life experiences, in which to practice.³⁹

The cases selected by Lewis for analysis deal with ministry. They range all the way from issues of caring, education, belief, Christian community, the internal life of the parish in the areas of caring, youth, the mission of the church, and management of money (parish leadership,

³⁸Lewis, p. 92.

³⁹Ibid., p. 97.

planning, and budget).

Each case consists of description (person[s] involved, time, setting, issues-problems), exploration, and analysis. The cases are analyzed from a framework built on the procedures from managing conflicts proposed by Lewis. They are, as may be recalled: (1) identification of conflict issues; (2) development of alternatives; (3) principles of conflict management; (4) styles of conflict management; (5) resources of faith; (6) contract for action.

No pat answers are supplied for each case, and the reader is expected to do the work of analysis and reflection. To that end, a set of suggestive questions to stimulate the reader-student to ask his or her own questions about the case and seek his or her own answers are supplied. Finally, information regarding possible use of the cases either for individual or group learning training is proposed.

By way of illustration, one case from Lewis's book is selected. It is titled: "Do We Need a New Pastor?"⁴⁰ After describing the case which deals with the role of pastoral leadership in a congregation, conflicts between the senior pastor and assistant pastor and who manages such conflicts in a parish, the following list of questions was then asked of the reader:

1. What types of conflict are present? Make a list of the conflicts. Identify the issue and the type.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 160-165.

of conflicts for each.

2. Who in the case is in the best position to intervene constructively and deal with a particular conflict? You might identify all the characters and decide what would be the most helpful action they could take in managing the conflicts.
3. What alternatives can you propose for each conflict? Can you propose alternatives that deal with two or more of the different types of conflicts simultaneously?
4. What principles would be most important to apply in each conflict and by whom?
5. Are there resources of faith present in the case that could be drawn upon in dealing with the conflicts? What are they, and how could they be used?
6. Did you gain any insight into the types of conflicts you are experiencing in your own life? Have you, for example, been treating a conflict as if it was an interpersonal conflict when it was truly an intrapersonal one?
7. Commit yourself to share one of your conflicts with at least one other person and explore how he or she might help you to deal with it.⁴¹

After answering some or all of the above questions which are applicable, the reader is ready to consider the possible uses of this case, which are:

1. With churches with multiple staff to train them in how they can work together effectively and how to manage their conflicts.
2. With lay leaders and pastors to address issues of governance and how pastors are selected, evaluated, and retired.
3. For individuals, both pastors and laity, to explore their own expectations of pastors and lay leaders, how their unexamined assumptions create destructive conflict, and how they might share these expectations and assumptions with each other.⁴²

The author of this paper strongly urges the wider use of case studies in learning how to deal with conflicts

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 165-166. ⁴²Ibid., p. 166.

as they are the closest thing to a real-life conflict. Psychologists tell us that people learn better when they are not under stress. Certainly, case studies are in a low risk environment. This in turn can help to maximize growth and learning.

Simulation Games

In helping churches to understand the functions of conflict and in teaching leaders the dynamics of conflict, it is often very useful to use simulation games. The reader is advised to look at one of the least expensive books of games and experiences by Pfeiffer and Jones.⁴³ The game most recommended and used by Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus was David Popoff's "Cities Game."⁴⁴ In their book Church Fights, both men maintain that they have developed a number of refinements in the use of this game as well as ways to use the experience for maximum learning. They say:

Using the "Cities Game" in the context of training is not unlike teaching in parables. The similarity is that a story is either told (as a parable) or acted out (as in the game) and the trainee is able to

⁴³William Pfeiffer and John Jones, A Handbook of Structural Experience for Human Relations Training (Iowa City: Iowa University Association Press, 1970), III.

⁴⁴David Popoff, "How to Play the Cities Game," Psychology Today, II (August 1968) 38 ff.

identify roles, issues, behavior, and conflict from which he might learn without the level of risk involved in actual situations.⁴⁵

Outside Consultants

Often a church facing deep unresolved conflict may wish to call in consultants from their denominations or sister churches who have had conflict experience. These consultants can act as referees or mediators-arbitrators in a dispute.

In choosing an outside competent consultant, the following criteria should be applied: (1) hire only judges who have some professional accreditation; (2) the consultant with whom you decide to work should have recent experience with groups in conflict; (3) you should select a person who is healthy and is aware of his own strengths and weaknesses; (4) the consultant does not have to be a Christian to be of help to you. Indeed, there is some advantage, in terms of neutrality, if he is not. But you would want to find one who is committed to the democratic philosophy or participatory-planned-change models.⁴⁶

At times, an organization such as a church may want to employ professional paid consultants. One such organization in San Diego, California, is known as the Human Development Training Institute. This institution designs curriculum

⁴⁵Leas and Kittlaus, p. 169. ⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 163-164.

in conflict, makes available on a rental basis films on conflict, provides one-day conflict management workshops to the public and is available to groups on a contract basis. The Human Development Training Institute operates in other parts of the United States and also in Canada.

In their catalogue, this company describes a typical three-day workshop and offers it for \$150 per person. Course material for this experience includes a listing of the workshop's objectives and its program. The objectives are:

1. To teach you how to help students gain control.
2. To identify your own and other typical modes of responding to conflict.
3. To use assertiveness techniques to prevent conflict from occurring or to control its dimensions when it erupts.
4. To assess the power needs of individuals in a conflict situation.
5. To choose between strategies which merely control conflict, and strategies which attempt to resolve conflict.
6. To use the techniques of role reversal to clarify the opposing sides of a given conflict.
7. To teach students all of the above plus twelve separate strategies for managing conflict.⁴⁷

Its program is described as follows:

HDP's Conflict Management Workshop shows you how to help students gain control. Teaching effective conflict management begins with encouraging conflict acceptance, not abolition, and proceeds as a deliberate process of awareness and evaluation coupled with the practice of awareness and evaluation coupled with the practice of specific skills which help students gain control of and resolve their own conflicts.

In this action-packed workshop, we've combined a

⁴⁷ Human Development Training Institute 1980-81 Catalogue of Seminars and Workshops for Training the Professional Educator (San Diego), p. 3.

variety of powerful, experiential activities to help you get in touch with the dynamics of conflict, and with a whole array of assertive, practical, and effective ways of helping students deal with it when it occurs.

There's time to cover such essentials as role-playing real-life conflict situations, applying a range of pro-social management strategies, and then assessing the results. Films record the actual applications of many of these same strategies with students, and you receive conflict management curriculum materials, and official certification.⁴⁸

IV. IN RETROSPECT: POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS IN THE CONFLICT/SCHISM OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Lack of Knowledge and Experience in Creative Conflict Resolution

One indisputable fact emerged out of this study. It is this. The pastors and lay leaders of the Chinese Community Church were manifestly unaware of creative conflict resolution principles and techniques. When conflict appeared in the church, it was not managed appropriately. This situation, repeated over a period of time, led to schism. Furthermore, there was little or practically no history of conflict in the Chinese Church from which its members could draw any lessons. Leas and Kittlaus say:

The church's history in dealing with conflict will weigh heavily on how it deals with it in the present. We recommend the book by Lee and Galloway, "The Schizophrenic Church." One of Lee's major points from his study of the experiences that six churches in northern California had with conflicts is that those which had good experiences with conflict in the past and worked

⁴⁹ Ibid.

out procedures for managing the conflict were successful in congregational conflict-coping.⁴⁹

In addition, they made the following observations:

"Those churches which had little or no conflict and suddenly are confronted by it have little ability to stay strong and deal with the conflict creatively."⁵⁰

Lee and Galloway found that only two out of the six churches studied by them and which were involved in the same controversy escaped dysfunctional and negative conflict. In the case of these two it was due to proper pastoral leadership, utilization of good conflict resolution principles, and encouragement of proper attitudes. The other four churches which suffered in varying degrees from the "negative" effects of conflict lacked the proper knowledge, leadership, and attitudes. In fact, one church was so polarized that seventy of its members left that parish.⁵¹ The Chinese Community Church, in like manner, lacked experience and the "know how" to meet its conflicts creatively and so suffered the loss of a great number of its members in the schism.

Now, one may ask the question: "Why weren't the two pastors in the Chinese Community Church able to give strong positive leadership in resolving the conflicts prior to the

⁴⁹Leas and Kittlaus, p. 84.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 37.

⁵¹Lee and Galloway, pp. 160-161.

schism?" The answer was clear: they were not adequately and professionally prepared in the area of conflict management. The researcher does not recall any such course given on "Conflict Management" in the late 1940s or the '50s during his seminary training. Neither was such a subject mentioned to him, that he can remember, while he was working on his M.A. in Human Relations in the 1960s.

The pastor of the Chinese Church, Rev. Jon Wong, was in an even worse situation. His undergraduate training was in music and economics and his theological training dealt heavily in Theology, Bible, and preaching, with very few courses in the behavioral sciences, including group behavior and pastoral counseling.

Inability to Separate the Issues

The Chinese Church had a very difficult time in dealing with its conflicts due to two reasons: (1) so many earlier unresolved conflicts seemed to come together at a crucial time (prior to the schism), and (2) it found itself unable to extricate the many issues one from the other so that each could be dealt with individually. As has been mentioned, Rev. Jon Wong often employed as part of his leadership style the tactic of tying in a substantive issue (i.e., social dancing on church premises) with an interpersonal issue (i.e., support of his leadership and loyalty to him). So what happened was that a church official

was frequently put into an untenable position. If he rejected an issue that the pastor supported, he would be considered disloyal to the minister by that pastor. But suppose the official was opposed to the issue on its own merits and still was loyal to the pastor? What should he do then?

Maintaining Unity in Diversity

This study has already discussed the gulf existing between the Overseas-born Chinese and the American-born Chinese in the Chinese Community Church due to diverse habits, values, outlook in life, psychological make-up, and theological differences. This division has largely nullified their effectiveness in serving Christ in the Chinese Church and was a prime factor in leading to the schism.

What could be done to bring Christian ABC and OBC together for the Kingdom's sake? Eddie Lo, a Chinese pastor, gives us some good advice along this line:

It seems to me that there are two objectives which we must keep in mind. First, for the sake of Christian testimony before the world, we must learn to live and work together. Second, we need to keep in mind that 50% of the ABC population is yet to be evangelized. This evangelistic task cannot be accomplished by OBC Christians because of the gulf separating them from the ABC's. Furthermore, among the ABC Christians there are so few leaders and resources are so limited that they are unable to evangelize their own people by themselves. The only solution is for both the OBC's

and ABCs to work together to achieve the goal.⁵²

Then Lo moves on to suggest that there are four separate levels of Christian relationship possible between the two groups:

The first or lowest level of relationship is that of COMMUNICATION. The two parties are not sure they are truly fellow Christians. Whereas both may profess faith in Christ, there are insufficient clues to guarantee that His saving grace has been extended, received and experienced. And when it comes to agreement on biblical truth, this does not exist at all. As a result, the only relationship possible is at the level of rudimentary communication. Under these circumstances the two parties should face one another, listen to one another, and speak to one another.

The second level of relationship is that of FELLOWSHIP. The two parties are reasonably sure that both are Christians. There is a Christ-centeredness and a love for the Scriptures that demonstrates the reality of God's saving grace in their hearts. Since God has apparently received both, they are under the obligation to receive one another. But when it comes to doctrinal agreement, this is still too limited. They differ over baptism, over eschatology, over even basic theological principles, over the Church and her mission. Obviously they cannot work together. But they should be able to take the other's confession of Christ sufficiently seriously that they can worship the Lord together and sit down together at this table.

The third level of relationship is that of COOPERATION. The two parties find themselves in such spiritual oneness as well as essential agreement over the basics of the Christian faith and practice that they conceivably might participate for a limited time together in a local project such as an evangelistic campaign, a Scripture-distribution program, a prophetic witness against some element of social injustice, etc.

The fourth or highest level of relationship is that of ASSOCIATION. The two parties find that they

⁵²Eddie Lo, "Toward a Greater Cooperation Between the Overseas-born Chinese and American-born Chinese" (a paper presented to the North American Congress of Chinese Evangelicals, August 1970), p. 15.

can do more than merely engage in cooperative efforts from time to time. There is such agreement between them that they are able to pool their forces and resources and merge with one another "for the duration." This is the ideal relationship which all believers should strive [for].⁵³

Lo then challenges both ABC and OBC Christians to new experiences in their relationship with each moving from mere communication to fellowship in earnest cooperation and on to the full ideal of association in the great task of evangelizing their kinsmen in America. He finally reminds us of Paul's five prerequisites for the kind of unity that leads to cooperative efforts (Eph. 4:2,3). If we lose any one of these, we will not achieve unity in any practical sense. The prerequisites are humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance toward one another in love, and the determination to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁵⁴

Use of the Win/Lose Style

The two conflict parties in the Chinese Community Church, once the storm had broken loose, were out to win and to "put down the other guy at all costs." "We are right and they are wrong" was the prevailing attitude on both sides. "Win under any condition and the relationship be damned!" was the byword of this style. No one thought of other

⁵³Ibid., pp. 15-17.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 18.

alternatives for solving the issues in the conflict that might have been acceptable to both sides. The parties involved saw no basis for compromise and consequently the results in terms of church conflict were disastrous.

The Conservative-Liberal Controversy

The writer of this project is convinced that the differences between the conservative-liberal factions will never be finally overcome to both sides' satisfaction. But that does not mean that the two groups cannot tolerate and accept their differences in Christ. Unfortunately, Rev. Jon Wong did not feel it was possible for any conciliation between the two sides to be achieved even after a year had passed since the schism. Rev. Wong's letter declining to give information regarding his view of the conflict/schism may be seen in Appendix C.

One of the basic principles in creative management of conflict is the absolute necessity for all conflicting parties to be "open" to each other. This means mutual respect and understanding.

The second reason for conservatives and liberals to accept each other is that they need each other. The liberals need the conservatives to challenge them to be authentic in their liberalism. The conservatives need the prodding of the liberals to engage in Christian social action. One without the other would result in a truncated church.

Institutionalize Conflict Management Processes

Lewis defines the term "institutionalized" as "a way of talking about building into an organization or a social system those processes, procedures, and structures that facilitate the management of conflict when it does arise."⁵⁵

Lee and Galloway make the following comments:

Probably the most significant method of conflict management is "institutionalization" or the provision of a permanent forum in which complaints and controversies can be aired as they arise. The advantages of such forums for conflict are evident. First, they allow the group to gain experience in facing conflict over minor matters, experience which becomes vitally important in handling serious conflicts. Second, they allow expression rather than accumulation of antagonism. Third, they inculcate the readiness to intervene appropriately in conflict situations and to redirect the dynamics of the situation in constructive ways.⁵⁶

These forums might be conceived of as a sort of "troubleshooting" intervening institution within the structure of the church.

There was no such agency at work in the Chinese Community Church prior to the schism. The closest thing to it, if it could be called that, was the Pastor's Evaluation Committee, whose work showed itself to be woefully inadequate to meet the need for an honest and open airing of

⁵⁵Lewis, p. 68. ⁵⁶Lee and Galloway, pp. 179-180.

differences between the pastor and lay officials of the church. Generally, the members of the Pastor's Evaluation Committee would review the performance of the pastor semi-annually, and if his work was good they would commend him, make suggestions for improvements, and during one of the evaluation meetings, consider the matter of the pastor's salary. Any deep-seated conflict between pastor and lay leaders would be glossed over for fear of "raising a rukus" or offending the pastor, especially in light of the fact that the pastor had shown reluctance to accept adverse criticism from the group in the past.

The writer of this project was pleasantly surprised that under the leadership of the current pastor, a Pastor Relations Committee was organized to act as an "intervening institution" within the life of the Chinese Community Church. In a lead article of the church monthly newsletter, the work and function of the newly created Pastor Relations Committee was described in the following manner:

Mamie Chan, Tom Hom, and Veda Woo have been named to the newly created Pastor Relations Committee. The prime aim of the Committee will be to maximize the effectiveness of the pastor. This will be done by promoting understanding between the pastor and both the congregation and the governing boards. A sense of common, shared ministry by the pastor and congregation is to be fostered.

Specific goals of the Committee are as follows:

1. Build through mutual counsel and support, a bond between the congregation and pastor.
2. Clarify expectations and images the congregation and the pastor have of each other.
3. Examine the financial needs of the pastor.
4. Ensure the balance between freedom and responsibility in clergy work.
5. Act as a liaison

for the Executive Committee.

The Committee will meet periodically with the pastor. They will also make reports to the congregation, church council, and the executive committee. Committee members have no official vote but are advisory in nature. Their role differs from that of the two members-at-large in that the two members-at-large are the bridge between the congregation and the governing bodies and that they have no votes.⁵⁷

The researcher is of the strong opinion that if such a group as the Pastor Relations Committee had been operating prior to the schism, many of the difficulties between the pastor and church officers and conflicts between pastor and congregation might have been mitigated or even avoided.

Application of the Case Study Method to Conflicts in the Chinese Church

After writing this project, the author would like to apply what he has learned to help the key leaders in his church (perhaps members of the Church Council first) to gain an understanding of the nature of conflict and learn techniques of conflict management. It is hoped that such exploration will help church leaders to be able to meet future conflicts in more adequate ways. The schism in the Chinese Church occurred in 1978. It has been three years since it happened, and it is now possible to look at the situation with a degree of hindsight, detachment, and

⁵⁷"Pastor Committee Named," The Good News (Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California), III, 5 (1980), 1, column 2.

perspective. It is important that the Chinese Church begin to understand what happened to it by analysis and reflection.

The writer proposes to set up his project in four steps. The first step is to set up a series of workshops in which a theory of conflict would be presented to provide a framework and then a process for understanding and dealing with conflicts. The topics studied will be: (1) the nature of conflict; (2) conflict from the perspective of Faith; (3) principles of conflict management; and (4) styles of conflict management.

Since G. Douglas Lewis's book Resolving Church Conflicts covers the above topics in such an admirable manner, it could very well be that the study group could use it as its basic text. The cost for the book is nominal. It is available in paperback and is written in nontechnical language.

The second step will be to assist the study group to put theory into practice. This can be done by having the study group analyze and evaluate the different cases in the second half of the book by Lewis. Exploration of selected cases will be made by the group to "get the feel" of the processes of managing conflicts and hopefully eventually to "internalize" these processes. This will be accompanied by group discussion of the questions furnished at the end of each case in the book.

The third step and the most important one in the writer's opinion is to apply the case method to the conflict/schism in the Chinese Community Church. The writer of this project plans to prepare and distribute among members of the study group a summary of the conflict/schism in his church. Many of the findings from the summary will be incorporated from Chapter III of this paper. Since many of the members of the proposed study group will probably be ones who were intensely involved in the conflict/schism, they will be in a position to give additional input. *

After becoming familiar with the nature of the conflict/schism in the Chinese Church, the participants will engage each other in exploring the case by considering such questions as:

1. What types of conflicts are present? Make a list of the conflicts. Identify the issue and the type of conflict for each.
2. What alternatives can you propose for each conflict? Can you propose alternatives that deal with one or more of the different types of conflicts simultaneously? What alternative courses of action are there for Rev. Wong? For the associate pastor? What do you think might have been the most constructive things the pastors could have done in terms of leadership?
3. Who in the case is in the best position to intervene constructively and deal with a particular conflict? You might identify all the characters and groups and decide what would be the most

helpful action they could take in managing conflicts.

4. What kinds of conflict management style is possible? Compromise? A Win/Win situation? What?
5. Are there resources of faith present in the case that could be drawn upon to deal with the conflict? What might they be, and how can they be used?
6. In working with the case, what barriers to unity in the church did you uncover? In yourself? In others? How would you go about lowering these barriers?
7. Did you gain any insight into the types of conflict you are experiencing in your own life? Have you for instance, been treating a conflict as if it were an interpersonal conflict when it really was an intrapersonal or substantive issue?
8. Commit yourself to sharing one of your conflicts with someone else and explore how he or she might help you deal with it.
9. Do you in the light of all that has been discussed and reflected on, think the schism in the Chinese Community Church could have been avoided? If so, how? If not, why?

Finally, the last step will be experienced in the final session of the workshop which will conclude on a devotional note. Besides prayers and scripture reading, a Litany for Conflict Management will be read and meditated on by all the participants. Lewis has prepared such a litany. He says:

A litany for conflict management reminds us again and again of those things that bestow creativity rather than bondage, growth rather than destructiveness. The elements of this litany intentionally parallel a Christian litany for worship:

Thanksgiving	I am an intentional person created by God with goals and a purpose. I live in a world with other intentional persons created by God.
Confession	I seek the fulfillment of my goals, even at the cost of the well-being of others and myself.
Absolution	God affirms and loves me in spite of the destructiveness of my will and actions.
Intercession	Because I experience affirmation and transformation, I am open to and care for the needs of others.
Service	I will invest my creative energy in the midst of conflict to search for alternatives that lead to the fulfillment and wholeness of all persons. ⁵⁸

This litany reminds all of us that it is God who leads us through the story and experience of human becoming and growth.

⁵⁸Lewis, p. 72.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I. SUMMARY

Three years ago, in 1978, when the writer began to define the topic for this project, he knew very little about the nature and dynamics of conflict management and the necessity and possibilities of creative problem solving. Today, at the conclusion of his investigation, he knows just a "wee bit" more and he is grateful to all who contributed to his growth. The principal findings resulting from his inquiry are as follows:

1. Conflict is a fact of life. Differences, strife, and conflict are at the heart of reality. It is present everywhere, in personal as well as organizational life.
2. Conflict is defined as "two or more objects trying to occupy the same space at the same time." Conflict occurs within groups when two or more persons disagree on the solution to a problem or the nature of a goal. Generally two different ideas of what should be done or two different opinions are present in a conflict situation.
3. The three major ways in which conflict are experienced are: (a) intrapersonal; (b) interpersonal; (c) substantive. Intrapersonal conflict is that struggle which a person has within himself; he is pulled in two different directions. Interpersonal conflict is

when two persons oppose each other and is generated by how one feels about the other. Substantive conflict has to do with issues, values, methods, ends, and objectives.

4. The causes of human conflict are rooted in human nature. One root is that we are intentional goal-seeking creatures. A second root cause is that we all see things differently. The third reason is that we are social creatures. We are social beings whose goal achievements are fulfilled in an atmosphere that includes other folks. There we also find the goals of others claiming the space we want to occupy. And so, conflict!
5. The Church as an organization and its members often have a great deal of difficulty in dealing with conflict because of its key assumptions about self, giving, the nature of love, and prohibitions against hostility, anger, and hate. Open conflict is often interpreted by Christians as unloving, unthinkable, clearly un-Christian. So most churches will deal with conflict within their ranks in terms of repression or avoidance. When such methods are used, negative effects of conflict will generally be manifested.
6. Conflict can be both positive and negative in its effects. Distributive or disruptive conflict occurs in a group when it is primarily disruptive, disassociating, and dysfunctional. The normal state of the group's equilibrium is upset and there is blocked understanding and communication is blocked. The group is immobilized and is not able to fulfill its functions; it is wasting its energy

in unhealthy conflict and finally it is experiencing the pain of interpersonal hostility. Integrative or constructive conflict, on the other hand, appears when the conflict plays a positive role of helping to maintain unity in a group, assist that group to accomplish its functions or mission, and contribute toward life=enhancement.

7. Our Christian faith can help us understand and deal with conflict. It speaks of sin, conversion, and redemption. When we are involved in conflict, and think only of our own selfish goals and desires and neglect the equally valued goals of others, we are in a certain sense, sinning. But God does not leave us in this abject state. He, by the power of His Holy Spirit, can convict us of our transgression, turn us around (conversion), and save us (redemption) so that we are reconciled to our brothers who were formerly our opponents. When we learn to support and affirm all persons, we are moving toward that "wholeness" God intends all of his children to aspire to from the time of creation.
8. There are two styles of leadership involved in conflicts. The authoritarian leadership style places the decision-making power in the hands of the "leader" and the democratic leadership style puts the decision-making function in the group itself. The appropriate choice of the proper leadership style is crucial to the resolution of conflicts. Conflict resolution approaches which are authoritarian, absolutist, or undemocratic invariably contribute to heightening the destructive elements of conflict. A democratic style of leadership will enhance the positive elements in conflict.

9. The authoritarian personality is the least able to solve conflicts in a constructive manner and he is most likely to utilize the authoritarian method in any conflict situation. However, authoritarian personalities can often come to an understanding of what they are like in group therapy, prayer groups, and self-discovery groups. In these groups, authoritarian personalities often receive unprejudiced reflections on their personalities and how they affect other people. Having achieved some insights on "how they tick," some are wise enough to change themselves accordingly.
10. The democratic style of leadership, then, is the most desirable for a pastor to utilize. He is neither an autocrat nor a "milquetoast."
11. Conflict must be managed. If it is not, it will manage us with disastrous results. It can be managed creatively. Creative conflict management might be defined as the process which involves the following elements: (1) identifying the issue; (2) exploring alternatives that will allow all parties to achieve what they want; (3) choosing an alternative; and (4) following it. The essential element in all this is to find new alternatives for action that previously did not exist and that are satisfying to both parties. This procedure seems easy, but is really most difficult to practice.
12. Creative conflict management presupposes an understanding of certain principles underlying the process. They are:
 - a. Help others to feel better about themselves
 - b. Strive for better communication.
 - c. Examine and filter assumptions.

- d. Identify goals, what is wanted.
 - e. Identify the primary issue.
 - f. Develop alternatives for goal achievement.
 - g. Institutionalize conflict management processes.
13. Every individual, group, and organization handles and manages conflict. That management takes the form of a combination of styles. All styles are appropriate depending on the context and issues. The five styles of conflict management are:
- a. Win/Lose.
 - b. Accommodation.
 - c. Avoidance.
 - d. Compromise.
 - e. Win/Win.
14. There are certain procedures one can take to maximize the best way to manage conflict so that a Win/Win solution is possible.
15. Most ministers and lay leaders of the church do not think of themselves as conflict managers. But, like it or not, this is what they are. So it is important for all involved in conflict resolution to be aware of whether or not his style of meeting a conflict is conducive or an obstacle to the resolution process. If one finds that a style being used is inappropriate to the occasion, it is possible to change that style. The attempt to change, however, is both difficult and satisfying.
16. There are two excellent ways to gain a deeper understanding of the conflict resolution processes: (1) use the case study approach, and (2) employ simulation games. These methods can be used by an individual (the pastor) or by the group (church

officials) or by both jointly.

17. Outside help is available for consultation in conflict disputes from denominational headquarters, sister churches, and paid professional organizations.

II. CONCLUSION

Certain significant facts emerged from this study of conflict/schism at the Chinese Community Church. They are as follows:

1. The schism followed as a direct result of all parties (pastors, lay leaders, and members) being grossly unaware of the nature of conflict and how to deal with it in a creative-constructive way. Therefore, an educational program is recommended in order to begin to rectify this deficiency. This could take the form of lay workshops on conflict resolution and eventually, the "case study" of what happened at the church. The intention will be that all the participants in the workshops will gain some insights and not repeat the same mistakes again in the future.
2. It is also important that a pastor become an expert in conflict management if peace, unity, vitality, and growth are to be the hallmarks of his parish. To this end, this researcher recommends that the Chinese clergy deepen their theoretical and practical knowledge of the approach and techniques of conflict theory and resolution in any or all of the following ways:
 - a. Undertake additional formal graduate study, including courses which will assist them to

learn more about human personality, group dynamics, general management theory and practice, theories of human behavior, comparative study of organizations, encounter groups, and communication. The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary announced that during its summer session in 1981, it will offer a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Care program which will include a course on Conflict Resolution.

- b. Become familiar with the psychological and psychometric devices available which can be utilized to measure and analyze the components of a conflict relationship and how a person is likely to act in a conflict situation.
 - c. Attend seminars or workshops specifically on conflict management. A Chinese pastor, like his American counterpart, must be so knowledgeable about conflict management that he can be able to engage in conflict without anxiety.
 - d. Be thoroughly acquainted with the professional literature and organizations concerned directly with conflict resolution. This additional knowledge could give the minister greater self-confidence in his guidance capacity.
3. Ethnic churches, including the Chinese Community Church, have implicit in their membership "possible seeds of discord" because of different values, styles of life, theological concepts (conservative vs. liberal), behaviors, language difficulties, and tenuous relationships exhibited by those groups that make up the parish. In the Chinese Church all the above differences were present between the OBC

and the ABC. A wise Chinese pastor trying to serve both groups in his church would endeavor to steep himself in a deeper understanding of the nature and contrasting characteristics of these two groups. He would also make an effort to work out methods and programs to bring about a high degree of integration between the OBC and the ABC. The present divisiveness, a predominant characteristic of Chinese Protestant Churches in America, needs positive and immediate attention.

4. A democratic leadership style is a necessity for a pastor serving a Chinese Church in the United States. Part of his congregation will be made up of ABC who expect that their pastor will use the participatory-equalitarian approach in his pastoral leadership--a style they are most familiar with. However, many Chinese pastors, especially those from Asia, are serving Chinese-American churches from an authoritarian and conservative background with negative results. They are frustrated and prone to blame their charges for being "not very spiritual" in conduct and thought. Perhaps the answer lies in a change in leadership style--the democratic approach which is more conducive to the "American Way of Life."
5. The Chinese Community Church is challenged, as a result of this study, to renew itself in terms of:
 - a. how it can accommodate diversity without disintegration.
 - b. how it can experience growth by the free exchange of ideas among conflicting groups in the same parish.
 - c. how it can move forward through a faith grounded in the love of God so that this love is shared

by all within the church--whether OBC or ABC, conservative or liberal, young or old.

6. Finally, Christians may need to be reminded that they not only have the insights and resources of the behavioral sciences, but they have an extra plus to help them resolve conflicts creatively. This added dimension, of course, is God. In situations where conflict is present, how many times have we stopped to pray things through to a proper solution? We can seek the wisdom that God promises us in James 1:2-5:

Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptation? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete. If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all ask him; he will not resent it.¹

In concluding this study, the reseracher wishes to point out to the reader that the two Chinese characters making up the word for "crisis" are "danger" and "opportunity." This is what conflict presents to us--both danger in making errors and opportunity to make the right decisions and thus move ahead!

¹The Living Bible (Paraphrased), p. 896.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Adorno, T. W., et al. The Authoritarian Personality. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950.
- Ferm, Virgilius. A Protestant Dictionary. New York: Philosophical Library, 1951.
- International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. 10 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1968.
- Leas, Speed, and Paul Kittlaus. Church Fights. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977.
- Lee, Robert, and Russell Galloway. The Schizophrenic Church: Conflict Over Community Organization. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969.
- Lewis, G. Douglas. Resolving Church Conflicts: A Case Study Approach for Local Congregations. San Francisco: Harper & Row 1981.
- Lippett, Ronald, and Ralph K. White. "An Experimental Study of Leadership and Group Life." In Readings in Social Psychology. New York: Holt, 1952.
- The Living Bible (Paraphrased). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1971.
- Moe, Edward O. Controversy and Conflict. Cincinnati: Board of Missions, Methodist Church, 1964.
- Pfeiffer, William, and John Jones. A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training. 5 vols. Iowa City: University Associates Press, 1970.
- Simmel, Georg. Conflict: The Web of Group Affiliations. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1908, 1953.
- Stagner, Russ (comp.) The Dimensions of Human Conflict. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967.

B. PERIODICALS

- Debolt, William Walter. "How Sects Began." Christian Century, XCVII (November 5, 1980) 1052.

- MacPhail, Elizabeth C. "San Diego Chinese Mission." Journal of San Diego History, XXIII, 2 (Spring 1977) 9-21.
- Mark, Raymond W., and Richard S. Snyder. "The Analysis of Social Conflict: Toward an Overview and Synthesis." Journal of Conflict Resolution, I (1957) 212-248.
- Martin, Edwin. "Songs of a City." San Diego Union and Evening Tribune. September 13, 1951.
- Popoff, David. "How to Play the Cities Game." Psychology Today, II (August 1968) 38-41.
- Seiffert, Harvey. "The Uses and Abuses of Ministerial Leadership." Pulpit Digest, LXIV (September 1963) 25.
- Wong, Wayland. "Reaching the ABCs--Who Are We Working with?" About Face, II, 1 (February 1980) 3.

C. PUBLICATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS

- Hall, Jay. Conflict Management Survey (1969). Copyright by and available from Teleometrics, Inc., P.O. Drawer 1850, Conroe, Texas 77301.
- Human Development Training Institute. 1980-81 Catalogue of Seminars & Workshops for Training the Professional Educator. 1725 5th Avenue, San Diego, CA, 92101.
- Martyn, Barbara J. Southern California Conference of the United Church of Christ Pastoral Letter, January 1981), pp. 12-13.
- "Pastor Committee Named." The Good News (Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California), III, 5 (1980).
- "Twelve Suggestions for Parishes on Managing Conflicts." Today's Parish. (Reprinted from Christian Leadership Letter, November 1976.)

D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

- Church Financial Records, Chinese Community Church, 1977-78.

Constitution and By-laws of the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California. Revised ed., 1966.

Hamby, Charles P. "Conflict in the Local Church: Its Cause and Creative Resolution." Unpublished Rel.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1965.

Lee, Peter A. Congratulatory Remarks. Chinese Community Church Diamond Jubilee Booklet, September 1960.

Lo, Eddie. "Toward a Greater Cooperation Between Overseas-born Chinese and American-born Chinese." A paper presented to the North American Congress of Chinese Evangelicals, August 1974.

Minutes of the Church Council of the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California, May 22, 1978.

Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California, June 18, 1978.

Sparks, Joanne (Church Treasurer). Special Financial Report for the period January 1979 to June 1979 for the Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California.

Summarization of Evaluation of Rev. Jon Wong, Pastor's Evaluation Committee, Chinese Community Church, October 30, 1973.

Wood, Julia T. "Constructive Conflict in Discussions: Learning to Manage Disagreements Effectively." Xeroxed Material Passed out to Participants at the Seminar on Creative Management of Congregations in Conflict, Institute of Changing Ministries, UCLA, April 7, 1981.

E. INTERVIEWS AND LETTERS

Chuck, Dr. James (Pastor, First Chinese Baptist Church). Telephone Conversation Interview, San Francisco, California, December 26, 1979.

Estes, Don H. (Officer, Japanese Ocean View United Church of Christ). Personal Interview, San Diego, California, June 15, 1978.

Recall Petition Letter, Signed by 21 Petitioners and Received by the Church Council, Chinese Community Church on June 5, 1978.

Wong, Rev. Jon. Letter of Declination to the Author,
December 7, 1979.

_____. Letter of Resignation, Addressed to the Church
Council of the Chinese Community Church, San Diego,
California, May 30, 1978.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF RESIGNATION OF REV. JON WONG

Below is a copy of Rev. Jon Wong's written letter of resignation as pastor of the Chinese Community Church.

May 30, 1978

Mr. Antony Cheng
Moderator of the Chinese Community Church
2402 Alto Cerro Circle
San Diego, California 92109

Dear Antony:

To my utmost regret, after much prayer and soul-searching I must submit my resignation to you in confirmation of my verbal announcement made on May 8, 1978. According to the Church's by-laws, I am giving you a 60-day notice. My pastoral relationship with the Church will be dissolved as of July 7, 1978, and my active duties terminate on June 7th. allowing 4 weeks unused vacation carried over from last year, if this arrangement is acceptable with you.

My resignation is based on my strong conviction against holding social dances on Church edifice, the house of God. It was a painful and difficult decision, but the opposing views of the majority of the Church officers even after I had clearly stated my conviction and the course of action I must undertake if opposed, led me to perceive that my spiritual leadership had been rejected. I can trace this conflict to the root of espousing two different theological convictions with the pastor adhering to the Biblical standard and another influential group disputing it. Such conflict is unreconcilable. It hinders the effectiveness of my ministry and cannot be resolved. There is, therefore, no other alternative but for me to submit this resignation.

I am most grateful to the Lord for allowing me to serve Him in the Chinese Community Church for almost nine years. During this period of time it has been most gratifying for me to see many led to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, many grow closer to Him, and still many serve Him with true

devotion. My family and I thank you and the congregation for the love and fellowship which you have extended to us in these past years. Even though we must leave, we pray that your work continue on, God be feared and worshipped, Christ be magnified, and the congregation be truly filled and led by the Spirit.

May His grace, peace and love abide in you always.

Your servant in Christ,
Jon Wong

APPENDIX B

RECALL PETITION LETTER

The letter which has been reproduced below is a verbatim translation from the Chinese into English of the recall petition signed by 21 petitioners. It was not dated. However, it was received by the Church Council on June 5, 1978.

Dear Sirs,

The church is founded according to the Words of God and the teachings of the Bible. The Constitution of the Chinese Church is also following the guidelines of Scripture. Therefore, the church is the temple of God, a pure and holy edifice and absolutely should not have activities which are against the teachings of the Holy Bible.

On this occasion, Rev. Wong is carrying out his holy duties to ask the church not to alter the church into a dance hall and was forced to resign. We greatly regret for this happening. We remember Jesus went up to Jerusalem and drove those who sold oxen and sheep and doves and the money changers out of the temple. This indicates that the temple of God is a holy and sacred place for prayer and worship. Based on this, the teachings of Rev. Wong is a golden rule, one hundred percent correct and reasonable. It is a great regret that some of us unable to differentiate this and forced him to take the position of resigning. This we hardly agree.

We are writing this letter to request the Council to call a Special Congregational Meeting to decide whether to retain Rev. Wong and whether social dance should be held in church edifice.

Sincerely,

Members of the Chinese
Community Church

Attached to the letter were the signatures in English and in Chinese of the petitioners. The grammatical errors are probably due, in this writer's opinion, to the mistakes made by the translator(s) of this letter. The original letter in Chinese and its English translation may be found in the Church Secretary's Minutes, June 1978.

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF DECLINATION

The following missive is a copy of the letter Rev Jon Wong sent the researcher of this project declining to give information regarding his perceptions and views of the conflict/schism.

Dec. 7, 1979

Rev. Robert Fung,
8420 Royce Court,
San Diego, Calif. 92123

Dear Bob:

Your letter has been on my desk for several days. Despite the season's busy schedule, I did give time and attention to your request for information concerning church schism. However, I don't think it is feasible for me to make any comment on the so-called "church split." I agree with you that it is our hope that time has begun its healing work, but during the healing process any irritation to the wound ought to be avoided.

I can say that the action I took was a resignation and not a church split.

The conciliatory steps in a situation of conflict management are always desirable though not always successful. But unfortunately in the case of the split, such conciliation did not find its place apparently in the minds of the people on either side.

Bob, I would like to be helpful to contribute to your paper. But, because of the present situation, I must apologize for not complying with your request.

Wishing you and Kay the season's blessings of peace
and joy as we celebrate the birth of Christ.

Sincerely yours,

Jon Wong